BOOK OF EXERCISES
FOR THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

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BOOK OF EXERCISES FOR THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

BOOK OF EXERCISES FOR THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

WRITTEN IN THE YEAR 1500 BY

GARCÍA ~~JIMÉNEZ~~ DE CISNEROS

1455-1510

AND TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL SPANISH BY

E. ALLISON PEERS

MONASTERY OF MONTSERRAT

1929

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TO THE

RIGHT REVEREND FATHER ABBOT

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TRUE FRIENDS AND PERFECT HOSTS

PREFACE

The Book of Exercises for the Spiritual Life *(Ejercitatorio de la vida espiritual) of García de Cisneros, besides its devotional value and its interests as being one of the earliest semi-mystical treatises of the Golden Age of Spanish mysticism, has the peculiar attraction of being closely related to the* Spiritual Exercises *of Saint Ignatius of Loyola. P. García, a Benedictine who came from Valladolid to Montserrat in 1493 and was largely responsible for the striking resuscitation of spirituality in that monastery during the years which followed, ruled it as Abbot till his death in 1510 and composed these Exercises for the use, primarily, of the community, and secondarily, of the pilgrims who visited the famous Catalonian shrine of Our Lady.*

The book first appeared, both in Spanish and in Latin, in the year 1500: recent researches at Montserrat have left no doubt that the Spanish version is the original. [1] *The extent to which Saint Ignatius used it in compiling his celebrated manual has been the subject of lengthy discussions between Benedictines and Jesuits. That there are striking resemblances in the two works is certain; that from the time of his visit there (1522) Montserrat*

1) *An English translation of the Latin version was published in London in the year 1876: the Spanish text has never before been translated.*

exerted a strong formative influence upon the character of Saint Ignatius is no less so. It is impossible that he should not have absorbed the late Abbot's book of devotion into his very being. More, in a brief space, one cannot say. I have alluded to the problem, in passing, in my Studies of the Spanish Mystics, *(London, 1927) Volume I, pp. 11-12. In the second volume, now in preparation, I hope to treat it in greater detail.*

Meanwhile, it seems well worth the pains to turn into English a book which has influenced a great saint and a great community, and, through them, many millions of pilgrims, retreatants, missionaries, religious and simple lovers of God. The translation is made literally from the Spanish edition of 1912, which is that used at Montserrat; on a few doubtful readings I have consulted the Benedictine fathers of that monastery, and I beg leave to dedicate the version to them as a token of my deep admiration for their magnificent services to scholarship as well as of my personal gratitude for the kindly welcome with which they invariably greet my importunities.

E. ALLISON PEERS.

University of Liverpool.

FEAST OF ST. BENEDICT, 1928.

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PROLOGUE

To the glory of the Most Holy Trinity, and of our Lady, the most glorious Virgin Mary, Mother of God, and to the great utility of those who desire to make progress in the spiritual life. In this book, most beloved brethren, we shall treat of how the exercitant and devout man should exercise himself according to the three ways which are called Purgative, Illuminative and Unitive; and how, by means of certain and determinate exercises, according to the days of the week, he may rise to the attainment of his desired end by Meditation, Prayer and Contemplation, undertaken in due order, his desired end being the union of his soul with God, the which thing is called by the saints wisdom that is true and unknown. The said three ways correspond to the three theological virtues, which are Faith, Hope and Charity, by means whereof we rise to the height of that mountain which is Divine love. To Faith corresponds the Purgative way, as a beginning; to Hope, the Illuminative way, as a mean; and to Charity, the Unitive way, as the end.

For, as Gerson says in his *Mount of Contemplation*, we may not pass from the imperfect to the perfect save by some mean; nor can any rise to a lofty height or become perfect in the virtues suddenly;

but such attainment is wrought as in the working of Nature which proceeds from the imperfect to the perfect. Fire, as we see, begins with smoke; after this, together with the smoke, comes the flame; after this, a pure fire of coals, bright and clear. Even so, the seed, when it is sown in the earth, first rots. Next, it takes life. And in the end it springs up from the ground, and grows to maturity. Furthermore, when the plant is in sterile ground, and must be transplanted, it is first rooted up. Then, secondly, it is planted again, and for a time appears to be dead. But afterwards it becomes green, grows up and yields fruit. And after this manner we may describe all other natural things.

And even so he that desires to rise to the Unitive and Contemplative way cannot in the beginning have perfection; but rather hee must first send forth, as it were, the smoke of displeasure at his past life. Further, he must weep bitterly, and be troubled, without consolation soever. But presently, together with this smoke, will come the flame of love, and at the last, pure love without smoke or any such thing. In the first state there will be mortification of the fleshly life that is past. In the second, the seed will spring up from the ground. In the third, the fruit will be perfected. And even so with the plant that will be rooted up from the bad and sterile ground of worldly living, the which thing will not be done save with great pain and trial. Then it will

be transplanted, when it will still suffer greatly. But in the end, when once it has taken strong and perfect root, the fruit which it yields will be abundant. Even so is it with him who exercises himself diligently in the three ways aforementioned, desiring to rise to the heights of Divine love. With the help of the Lord he will in a brief time reach perfection, if through his own fault and negligence he remain not idle, ceasing to practise the exercises, or returning to vice and carnal delight, the which things he must study and labour to conquer and uproot; for otherwise he would profit but little, according as is set forth at length in the treatise of the Spirituaf Ascents, the which begins 'Beatus Vir'.

PART THE FIRST

CHAPTER I

How greatly it behoves the religious who desires to progress in the spiritual life to seek good company and withdraw from bad.

THE prophet David warns us, saying: «With the holy man thou shalt be holy and with the perverse thou shalt be perverted» Wherefore, most beloved brother in Jesus Christ, look to it diligently that thou be not deceived by bad company, which is dissolute and deceitful. Unite thyself with some religious who is virtuous, disciplined, instructed, matured in years and with the fear of God, from whom thou mayest ever hear words of consolation that are good and worthy to be followed. Consider that, even as coal which has no heat becomes warm and glows when it is put into the burning fire, even so a man that is lukewarm,—yea, that is cold,—becomes fervent and devout, well instructed and well accustomed, when he unites himself with one who likewise is devout and fervent. Even so the Apostles, through uniting themselves with our Redeemer, were made holy men and were filled with the Holy Spirit. Even so Saint Mark, uniting himself to Saint Peter, was instructed in the Holy Gospel and made worthy to be an evangelist. Even so Timothy, in the company of Saint Paul, was instructed from his youth up in

the Holy Spirit, and by the same Apostle Saint Paul was ordained a bishop, and, preaching the Holy Gospel, died a glorious martyr. Again, Saint Augustine, companying with Saint Ambrose, was instructed and baptized by him, so that he became worthy to be the most illustrious Doctor of Holy Church, and became renowned throughout the world. Further the holy youth Maurus, through the company of our glorious father Saint Benedict, became worthy to be an abbot most illustrious, and to be resplendent for his virtues and miracles. And Saint Bernard, through the company of the holy abbot Stephen of the monastery of Citeaux, became a light of religion in his Order; and like a star most bright he shone over the whole earth, and shines still in Heaven. Many more examples could be set down here, both from the Old Testament and from the New, showing how great is the profit of good company for the health of the soul and for progress in spiritual exercises, and how great is the harm in religion of conversation and company that are evil; the which things we pass over here to avoid prolixity.

CHAPTER II

How necessary to the religious is the practice of spiritual exercises for the cleansing of the spirit.

Most Beloved Brethren: In the book of the Psalms it is written of that great prophet David, that he said: «I meditated with my heart by night, and I exercised myself and cleansed my spirit». And, in truth, the devout religious who desires to repair and restore to its former estate his spirit, made in the image and likeness of God, that has gone down from Jerusalem to Jericho (that is to say, from the estate of peace and tranquillity to an estate of mutability) must take example from the illustrious prophet aforementioned, and with exercises and purgation must cleanse, purge and chasten his spirit, both from vice and sin, as also from corrupt affections, to the end that he may be capable of receiving the graces and gifts of the Holy Spirit. For it is written that into the malign soul wisdom shall not enter, neither shall it dwell in the body that is subject to sin. And since, as Saint Augustine says, the source of peace and tranquillity in the soul is order, and all that is not ordered may not abide but is ever unquiet, and that which is ordered abides, and is quiet, and brings great strength to the soul, (for it is very terrible to its enemies, even as a line of battle

in fair array), therefore is it a thing most necessary to lay down some plan and make rules for the practice of certain exercises, to the end that we may know what it is that we have to do, and, knowing it, may ever abide in peace, and, by practising these things, may restore our spirits to the dignity which they had at the first.

CHAPTER III

Of the fruits which come to the devout religious from the practice of fixed and duly ordered exercises.

VERY profitable are the fruits of good exercises. The first fruits thereof are the avoiding of evil and vain thoughts and harmful affections, whereby we are ofttimes infected, having, as it were, no bridle in our hands wherewith to check the movements of our heart. For from our childhood up our thoughts and feelings have ever been inclined to evil, and, as it is written in the book of Genesis, the heart may not be recalled from evil thoughts, save through Divine grace and through certain and determinate exercises. For as the abbot Serenus says in the Conferences of the Fathers, the soul by nature can never be idle; and by reason of the mutability proper to it, it must needs run to and fro, except it first direct its movements to some fixed thing. And, according to the teaching of the saints, the soul that is without fixed exercises becomes like a house that has four doors open, so that those that will may enter and leave it, its master having no knowledge thereof: even so may thoughts enter and leave the soul which has no such exercises.

The second fruit thereof is this, that the soul is made stable, and that thus its works may be expe-

dient and good, for the doing of a thing many times makes it to be second nature, whereto our soul becomes habituated by its continual working. Those that have not fixed exercises receive as many counsels from their exercises as the works which they see others perform. To-day they practise one exercise, and to-morrow another, and forever they are distracted and go astray; the which thing is greatly to be reprehended, as we read in the Conferences of the Fathers, and in the treatise which begins 'Homo quidam descendit de Hierusalem in Jericho', wherein it is said that such men profit little or nothing.

The third fruit which comes thereof is fervour. For when his exercises are duly ordered the religious is more fervent in their fulfilment, and he will not for very shame set aside through negligence or sloth that which once he has taken up with great diligence and fervour. For this reason good religious are wont to practise certain exercises, which are of great profit, according to set times and hours: that is, that they may not grow slothful in spiritual progress, but may strive, by means of these exercises, to be more and more enkindled daily in such progress. And according to the doctrine of the saints, even as lukewarmness and coldness are caused by unquiet and remissness in spiritual exercises, even so is a sweet and present affection, which in time becomes habitual, caused by the continual practice of spiritual exercises pertaining

both to the soul and to the body, by a practice of them, that is to say, without remissness soever.

The fourth fruit is this, that through these exercises thou hast knowledge the more readily of the extent of thy progress or failure, of how much thou hast gained upon the road or lost. By means of them thou mayest consider if thou hast been more fervent and more earnest upon one day than upon another, or colder and more negligent; so that by comparing one day with another thou mayest see if thou be going forward or falling back.

The fifth fruit is this, that far greater is the progress and the merit of one who works in due order, with intention that is modest and right, than of one who works many and difficult things, but distractedly, without due care and order. And, according to the doctrine of the saints, one single well-ordered accomplishment by a man that is wise is of much greater advantage than many such by one that has no wisdom. Look then how abundant is the fruit that comes to those who are able to devote themselves to fixed and determinate exercises; and to the end that such fruit may increase greatly, we will, with the help of the Lord, set down such exercises, by means whereof the devout religious may exercise himself for the whole week, according to the three ways which are called Purgative, Illuminative and Unitive, even as we will declare hereafter.

CHAPTER IV

Of the qualifications and conditions which should mark those persons that practise spiritual exercises.

First, most beloved brethren, it behoves one that will exercise himself in the spiritual life to purge his heart of all mortal sin, to have contrition, and to make a general confession; for the heart that is impure cannot receive the influences of the Holy Spirit.

The second condition is that he despise all carnal delight, withdrawing himself from all lightness, and from laughing, talking and other such consolations. For as Saint Bernard says, the consolation of God is a thing most subtle, and is given to none who receives consolations of others. And even so says Saint Augustine: when our heart finds cause for delight with that which is without, it has no consolation from that which is within. The Children of Israel received not the manna until they had no more flour of that which they had brought from Egypt. And what, my brethren, is the flour of Egypt save our works in this world? Until these fail us, we shall not receive the manna, which is the consolation of God.

The third condition is that the heart be freed from outward and superfluous cares, so that as a

vessel that is empty it may be offered to the grace of our Lord God.

The fourth condition is that it may have fervour for progress, after the example of Jacob who served for Rachel, feeling neither the heat of the sun nor the cold of the winter by reason of the greatness of his love. Let the soul be fervent in ordering its exercises; and, when once these are ordered, let them be followed in such manner that even the smallest of them may never be put aside. For he that is negligent in small things little by little forgets the things that are greater.

The fifth condition is, that a man be moderate,—that is, that he preserve discretion both in beginning the exercises and in practising them, so that they oppress him not by their number nor cause him to withdraw indiscreetly from his goal. For we must be clear about our goal, which is to love God without any mean and to imprint Him in our heart, and for no reason and in no manner whatsoever to withdraw ourselves from the interior act of loving Him. To such love there is no limit. Our spiritual exercises, however, which will lead us to this end, are to be thought of in another manner: that is to say, they are to be ordered in such a way as may best lead us to this end, which is the love of God and purity of heart according as it is written in the Conferences of the Fathers and in the treatise of *Beatus Vir*.

CHAPTER V

What the exercises should be, and of the moderation which the religious should observe in them.

It behoves not, brother, that thou undertake lightly any exercises soever, but rather must thou undertake and order them following the example of the holy Fathers, according as it is written: «Do all things according tho the example wich was showed thee in the Mount». The Fathers kept certain conditions in their exercises, the which thou must also keep in thine, and they are these: The first condition is that they be in agreement with the Divine Scriptures, and with the counsels of the saints, and with the examples of the Fathers; for all that agrees not with Holy Scripture is suspect, and properly so, although it appear good. And because they are many who wrest the meaning of the Scriptures to accordance with their own opinions, therefore it behoves thee to communicate thy exercises to some enlightened and spiritual man, and take his counsel upon them.

The second condition is that thou see diligently that thy exercises be moderated, especially as to two things. According to the doctrine of the saints thou must observe these two things in thy exercises. First, thou must not be overmuch afflicted, and immoderate in thy occupation. For through overmuch afflic-

tion, the sweetness of the mind becomes bitter. And through immoderate occupation the tranquillity of the mind is destroyed. Wherefore it behoves thee to moderate thy exercises, that all things may be done with variety and moderation of spirit, even as it is said: « Now read, now pray, now labour fervently; thus the hours will be short, and thy work will be light, if thou occupy not thyself so much therein that it make thee weary, or sick; for otherwise thy work will not be lasting. »

The third condition is that the exercises be ordered in such manner as is fitting to each one, according to his exterior and interior disposition and state. Not all things are fitting to all men, neither is there aught that all can do equally well. But each man must undertake such exercises as fight and do battle against his inclination to vice, and promote and encourage his inclination to virtue, for by such exercises he will profit most. For, as Saint Ambrose says, we must seek in all that we do that which is fitting to the person, to his age and to his time and that which will be of the greatest profit to the greatest number.

The fourth condition is that thou take great care that thy exercises be not only occasional,—that is, that thou practise them not now, and now put them aside. Rather must they be regular and stable, and thou must persevere in them to the end. For, as Saint Bernard says, that man is greatly to be suspected of

lightness who now desires this, now that; now practises one thing, now naught; whose mind is never fixed, who makes as many plans for himself as he sees places, coveting that which he has not, wearying of that which he has, and profiting by naught. He that would make progress in his exercises must set for himself a goal, and to the end that he may attain it, must make ordinance concerning the means, — that is, the exercises — and remain steadfast with regard to them. The goal of our exercises, as we are taught by the abbot Moses in one of his Conferences and in the treatise *Beatus Vir,* is to attain to purity of heart and perfect love of God. The latter end — that is, charity or happiness, — is our final end. The former end, which is purity of heart, is secondary and dispositive, for it disposes us to attain perfect charity and happiness. And to these two ends we must ever direct the eye of the soul, even as the archers set their mark and direct their arrows towards it: for otherwise our labour would be great and our profit small.

CHAPTER VI.

Of the considerations which incite us to be fervent in spiritual exercises.

The Apostle Saint Paul admonishes us, saying: «In your solicitude be not slothful, but with fervent spirit serve the Lord». Since this is so, we must consider with great solicitude the awakening of our fervour. For, according to the doctrine of the saints, the fervent desire of anything that is good is the beginning thereof. And he who begins not by having desire or fervour for religion will never live fervently therein. As Saint Bernard says, it is needful that the flame of desire lead the way to the place whither one would go. And in order to kindle this flame within ourselves we shall set down in this place sixteen considerations which every devout religious must study earnestly to lay up in his heart, for the spiritual life can in no way endure except one think continually upon them.

The first of these is, that we should consider with great diligence how greatly God merits our love, and must have our love, by reason of His sovereign perfection, and of His blessedness, greatness, beauty, infinite power and ineffable wisdom. For He is Himself our sovereign good, and in Him are other perfections innumerable. Consider then what love thou

hast for Him, and remember that all is but little in respect of that which thou shouldest have.

The second consideration is of the great pain and anguish, the many pangs, hard words and harder blows, the most cruel and bitter tortures which He endured, and how He vouchsafed to die upon the Cross for us, and how little we are willing to suffer for His sake.

The third consideration is of the joys which He has promised us in the glory of the soul and body which are to be, and in their eternal and everlasting happiness, and of the lukewarmness wherewith we strive to attain such sovereign treasure.

In the fourth place, let us consider how many and great benefits our Lord gave to the human race in creating and redeeming it, how He called each one of us to the life of religion, holding us in His hand and keeping us, and how for so great benefits not only do we not give Him thanks, but day by day we offend Him.

Fifthly, let us consider how many and great are our sins which He has pardoned, and how often we return to them; and, far from giving thanks to Him, fall into the most grievous sin of ingratitude.

Sixthly, let us consider how great is the perfection for which we are bound to strive: how we must keep the ten commandments of the Lord by reason of the authority of Him Who gave them, and consequently how we must never commit mortal

sin, but love God above all things, loving naught in this life above Him or equally with Him; and how we must desire the good of our neighbours, loving them as ourselves, desiring their welfare, and that they may love God above all things.

The seventh consideration is of the many examples of perfection which are given in the lives of the holy Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles and all the Saints, who were mortal men every one, even as ourselves, though our sloth is such that we follow not in their footsteps.

The eighth consideration is of the beauty, profit and honesty of the virtues, and the deformity, confusion and shamefulness of the vices; notwithstanding which we flee from the virtues and cling to the vices closely.

The ninth consideration is of the difficulty of the spiritual life for those who through lukewarmness delay its beginnings; for though our Lord is ever ready to aid the weakness of our free will, we have no care to do that which lies to our hands. Hence comes it that few make a good beginning, and fewer still continue in the good which they have begun, and fewest of all persevere therein. Wherefore we must have confidence in the Divine mercy, and, fervent in the use of all our knowledge, will and power, we must make due approach to perfection.

The tenth consideration is of the difficulty of vanquishing all worldly and carnal temptations, both

such as arise from the appetite for worldly possessions, and those which come from the counsel and fellowship of wicked men with whom we have our conversation. No less powerful are other temptations, both subtle and malicious, of the invisible demons and spirits. While we ourselves are lukewarm and slothful, as though we were not in the midst of so many and great dangers, but were secure and safe; and in no way do we keep due vigil and resist them.

The eleventh consideration is of how few there are that persevere to the end. Many, it is true, begin to climb the ladder of perfection, mount quickly and arrive half way, but they come not to the top. Few there are that give heed to the great profit of perseverance, for the which he that would be saved must ever pray. For we know of a truth that one may persevere for thirty or forty years and not be saved, unless he persevere to the end.

The twelfth consideration is of the shortness of this present life, and of the good deserts which we may gain therein. If once we lose this life, nevermore may we return to it. Yet we pass the time which is measured out to us therein, without thought of advantage, and draw nearer daily to death and the Divine judgment, being devoid of virtues and full of all vice.

The thirteenth consideration is of the greatness of the rigour, severity and sternness of the justice of God, since, for a single deadly sin unatoned for

by contrition and amendment, both soul and body will be punished by the Divine justice aforementioned and terribly tormented in Hell for ever. Nor will a single deadly sin, how small soever, be allowed to pass the rigour of this justice. We ought therefore to consider here how great is our blindness and folly, for though the justice of God may be satisfied and placated by true penitence, with sighs and groans for sin committed against Him, we take no count thereof. Rather, like men that are dull of understanding, we draw nearer to the hands of His justice daily.

The fourteenth consideration is of the greatness, the cruelty, the diversity and the eternity of everlasting punishment, which each of us merits by reason of his delight, however brief and momentaneous, in those things which God has forbidden. For though we believe these torments to be manifold, terrible and everlasting, we never think how we may escape them; and indeed we ought for many millions of years to suffer voluntarily temporal punishment, that we may free ourselves from those pains and torments which will have no end. For the Prophet said: « Which of you will be able to dwell with fire that is hot and devouring, and with everlasting heat?. »

The fifteenth consideration is of the exemplary judgments of God which He has wrought upon many who lived for a long time, and continued in great holiness, yet who were forsaken by God our Lord

by reason of the vices hidden within them. If we considered these duly, I doubt not but that we should be more fervent in well-doing. Upon which the Prophet warns us, saying: «Come and see the works of God, for He is terrible in His counsels upon the children of men». Here we must consider our own salvation, and fear lest we be parted from the grace of God.

The sixteenth and last consideration is of the exceeding great desire wherewith the blessed ones await us, and the great longing wherewith they desire our coming. If we thought well upon this, I doubt not but that we should yearn and strive to join them. Concerning this, Saint Bernard says: The angels await us, that their fall may be restored. The blessed await us, that their glory may be fulfilled. God the Father awaits us, His sons and heirs, that He may establish us and set us over all His possessions. The Son awaits us, as brothers and joint heirs. The Holy Spirit awaits us, for He is charity and kindness, in Whom God the Father has predestined us from eternity, and most assuredly wills the fulfilment of His predestination. O brethren, how in this life we should hasten to any place if we knew that our Lady were awaiting us there! How much the more then should we hasten to that place of happiness and glory without end, where so many await us with so great affection! Considering thus, we cannot but desire to be freed from this flesh and to be with Christ.

The end of these considerations consists in two things: first, in the feeling of our own imperfection; second, in the desire to attain to a loftier perfection and to greater fervour. Who then will be the man that will revolve these things in his heart, and, except he have a spirit of iron, will not forthwith be inspired to good living, casting from him negligence and sloth?

These things aforementioned I have set down here, that thou mayest read them, not once, but many times; nay, I have written them that they be ever in thy memory, that thou have them daily in thy heart lest it grow cold; and, if it grow cold indeed, that it be kindled anew by the remembrance of these considerations.

CHAPTER VII

How the vows that we have made, and the excellence of this place, inspire us to be fervent in our exercises.

We read in Ecclesiastes: «If thou hast promised aught to God delay not to pay it, for very displeasing to Him is a foolish and faithless promise.» Now the solemn vows which we have made are a strong inducement to us to live fervently and well the religious life. For we must steadfastly believe that every vow truly made bears with it the obligation to keep it. And, as certain Doctors say, «A vow is of greater obligation than an oath». So that he who transgresses a vow once made commits mortal sin, more so than he who breaks an oath, as Saint Thomas says in the second part of his *Summa Theologica*. And what is it, my brethren, that we have vowed, save to labour in the practice of an ordered life, and to do such works as may lead and bring us to perfection therein? Saint Bernard says that he who withdraws from such striving is held and reputed to be a transgressor of his vow. It is therefore to be noted that when we strive to make progress continually, and our effort and desire for noble and perfect things grows greater, we are not reputed as transgressors of our vows, albeit many times we fall. Let us then

have this desire always, and exercise ourselves duly, fulfilling that which we have promised, to the end that we may attain that which is promised to us. Let us take example from the men of this world, who have such horror of breaking their promises, that captives who have been freed under promise to return to their captivity return thereto within the promised time, even when they know that severe punishment awaits them.

Another inspiration to fervour is the excellence of this place wherein we dwell. Would that we thought more deeply how grave is the offence of such as live within a monastery and are lukewarm and remiss! Of such as these says the prophet Jeremiah: « What is this, that my beloved wrought much wickedness in my house? ». Of a truth the offence of such is very grave, and this for many reasons.

First, by reason of the nobility of the religious life, which they transgress when they speak not the truth, by giving not to God that which they promised Him.

Secondly, by reason of the holiness of this place, according to the word of Isaiah: « In the land of the saints he wrought evil, and he shall not behold the glory of God. » And elsewhere Jeremiah says: « Thou hast defiled my holy land ».

Thirdly, in a monastery there is much occasion and time for holy living. Yet it is greatly to be

deplored that our spirit is so perverse and hardened that it despises manna, and desires rather to eat onions, which cannot be eaten without tears.

Fourthly, there is inspiration in the company of good men, for he that is of evil life among the good is like Judas among the disciples of the Lord, and like Satan among the sons of God.

Fifthly, the Lord makes provision for us. For he that impugns the Master that provides for him is accounted a traitor. And even dogs are wont to love one that shows kindness to them.

Sixthly, the vows and profession of the backslider increase his sin. For it is no small crime that he who in the first place has offered himself to God should withdraw from Him and give himself to the enemy, and in this way lie to the Holy Spirit.

Seventhly, he that is of evil life within a monastery occupies a place that should be filled by one that is good.

Eighthly, such a religious presumes to do things for the which he is completely unworthy. For he presumes to set himself in the presence of God, and many other such things.

Ninthly, he has no fear of the gravest punishment, which affrights him not at all; and we read that such as commit sins in holy places are punished after this manner.

Tenthly, and lastly, he has no fear of the perils whereinto he falls. For he loses all the good things

of the religious life, and withdraws himself from the nobility thereof: nay, he is like to the unrepentant thief, who descends from the cross (that is, the cloister) to the torments of Hell. And as I draw to an end I admonish you that when any one of you finds himself slothful he should say with Saint Bernard: Why dost thou grow slothful, my soul? Consider how the trials of this life are not worthy of thy guilt in times past which is pardoned thee, nor of the grace that now is given thee, nor of the glory that is to come and is promised thee. Awaken, my soul, for if great are the things which we promise, those that are promised us are far greater yet. Let us fulfil the first, my soul, and for the second let us yearn. Consider how brief is the delight that a man takes in sin, aud how endless is its punishment; how light are the trials of virtue, how infinite is its glory. Many indeed are called, and few are chosen; yet all receive their reward: these in glory, and those in endless pain. Watch therefore, brother, over thy exercises, and sleep not at the time of prayer which is appointed to follow Matins. For when thou least thinkest it thou shalt be called; and consider that those who watch are called blessed.

Hitherto we have said how necessary is good company, and the practice of spiritual exercises; we have written of the fruits of exercises that are duly planned and of moderation therein; of the qualities that are required of exercitants, and of considerations

that inspire us to be fervent. It is seemly now that we speak further, and lay down the practice of the exercises which the religious ought to have, according to the three ways which are called Purgative, Illuminative and Unitive; to the end that, by means of the practice thereof, and through prayer and contemplation, he may mount by ordered steps till he reach the desired end, which is the union of the soul with God. For, as Saint John says: « He that unites himself to God is one spirit with Him ». And this is called by the saints the attainment of true wisdom.

CHAPTER VIII

How needful it is for the religious to set apart certain matters, times and seasons for his exercises.

THE religious must ever make use of divers spiritual meats. For we see by experience that, delightsome as food may be, it yet engenders loathing, and is wearisome to the palate, if it be fed upon habitually; and even that in such cases less delicate food is desired. And if meats of divers kinds are given to a man, he eats the more freely of them if he finds in each of them new savour. Even so the devout religious has need of divers spiritual meats when first he gives himself to prayer. For, when a man strives to soar to Heaven with enkindled desire, he gives no small labour to his head and to his breast and to all the other members of the body. Wherefore it behoves us to make use of divers kinds of mental food, for in the variety of their savour the body may find recreation. The first meat must be devout prayer and chaste desire, whereby the soul desires to be cleansed, enlightened and made one with the blessed Spouse. For this reason, and especially for beginners, it is needful to meditate upon two things. First, upon such things as make them to fear, whereby the soul may set out upon its spiritual course towards union with God. Secondly, upon the life and passion of

our Redeemer, and that often. For the life of the Saviour, and His death and passion, are like to a door whereby a man may enter into Divine love. To symbolise this His side was pierced with a spear, that we might clearly know that we may not enter the love of His Deity save through the doors of the wounds of His Humanity. And when the servant of God begins to be rooted in the love of his Deity, then may he withdraw himself from meditating on the Humanity. For he thought thereon in the first place that he might attain the joy of this meditation. Wherefore we will make division for one week, according to the days thereof, of the following matters: of fear, according to the Purgative Way; of the benefits of God, according to the Illuminative Way; of the perfection and praise of God, according to the Unitive Way. This we do that the exercitant may have a variety of spiritual meats. And let this be sufficient as to the matter of meditation.

With respect to the times thereof and the seasons: we see, brethren, how much more profitable it is to the body, and how much more convenient to the appetite and desire, to habituate oneself to take food at fixed hours. And in the same way the soul that desires to live in the love of our Lord must have fitting hours wherein it may withdraw itself apart, and unfailingly have time for prayer, whereby it may daily take spiritual food and wine of the consolation of God. For this banquet and this food are of much

more delight and pleasure to the soul than is physical food to the flesh. Nor is it reasonable that the soul, who is mistress of the body, should fast and be bereft of the delight and sweetness of her food, while the flesh, who is a bad and shrewish handmaid, should take her meat at fixed hours.

It may easily be shown how great is the advantage of fixed hours for prayer. For as through custom of good works there comes to the soul a habit and inclination whereby it has pleasure and delight in good works, even so, when a man has fixed times and seasons for prayer, he finds himself the fitter and the readier at such times to lift up his heart to Heaven by means of good desires. And the most fitting time for prayer is night, as the prophet says: «The night is a light to me in my desires». When the servant of God has a fixed hour for prayer, he finds in himself a continual preparedness to give himself to prayer at that time. And if he be unable at that time to pray, his heart has great grief thereat, above all if the fault be in his negligence or in any cause yet more unworthy. For the soul cannot be without grief when it finds itself bereft of its sweetest food, and of the spiritual joy and delight of fruition which it was wont to know. Wherefore we set down in conclusion that the fittest time for prayer is the night, as the Psalmist says: «In the day time God commanded His mercy, and His song in the night time», as though he had said more clearly: «God

commanded us to do works of mercy in the day time, and in the night time to sing praises to Him in song».

According to Saint Jerome and Saint Bernard, the fittest hours are after the night watches and after Compline, for at these times the servant of God is best prepared for spiritual exercises. Let this be sufficient as to times and seasons.

CHAPTER IX

How for many reasons the saints made ordinance that at certain times and seasons religious should give themselves to mental prayer.

It was not without cause, most beloved brethren, that the holy Fathers made ordinance that at stated hours, by day and by night, religious should give themselves to mental prayer; for above all, according to Saint Bonaventura, it is needful that he who will make progress should train his heart in continual exercises of devotion and prayer. For, as this saint says, the religious who practises not such prayer day by day is not only wretched and unadvantaged but he has, in the sight of God, a dead soul in a living body. So great is the efficacy and the virtue of devotion that it alone wins battles and conquers the temptations of the evil spirits, our enemies. And every soul that is without this dew of prayer brings forth works that are imperfect and tainted with distastes of many kinds. While, on the other hand, the profit of prayer is great, and its virtue inestimable, in the attainment of things that are good and the banishment of such as are hurtful.

If thou wilt learn to bear adversities, be thou a man of prayer.

If thou wilt overcome temptations and tribulations, be thou a man of prayer.

If thou wilt trample underfoot evil affections, be thou a man of prayer.

If thou wilt know the wiles of Satan and avoid his snares, doing the works of God, and walking in the path of trial and affliction, be thou a man of prayer.

If thou wilt exercise thyself in the spiritual life, and have no care or desire of the flesh, be thou a man of prayer.

If thou wilt drive away the flies of vain and worldly thoughts, be thou a man of prayer.

If thou wilt nourish thy soul with thoughts, desires, yearnings and devotions that are holy and good, be thou a man of prayer.

If thou wilt establish thy heart upon that which is pleasing to God, by means of a manly spirit and a constant purpose, be thou a man of prayer.

If thou wilt uproot the vices, and be filled with virtues, be thou a man of prayer.

And if thou wilt rise to the heights of contemplation, and know the embraces of thy Spouse, be thou a man of prayer.

For in contemplation we receive the unction of the Holy Spirit, which instructs the soul in all things, and by exercises of prayer we reach contemplation and delight in the things of Heaven.

Have ye seen, my brethren, the reasons for the practice of prayer, and the greatness of its power and virtue? Then, for the confirmation of all these things,

setting aside the proofs of the Scriptures, let this be to you for an especial proof, namely, that we see and hear daily, in our own experience, of those that have attained to all these things, and to many more, by the virtue of prayer alone, though they be persons very simple and unlettered. Wherefore all that desire to imitate Christ should give their souls continually to prayer, and most of all should a religious who has most time for these exercises. The holy and seraphic doctor aforesaid writes to his sister thus: «I admonish thee, and in so far as I may I straitly command thee, that thou make prayer thy principal exercise, and that naught delight thee save prayer alone; for there is no other thing wherein a man can find such joy as in dwelling with God; and this comes through prayer.»

CHAPTER X

How beginners in the service of God must first of all have fear, which is the beginning of Divine wisdom; and of divers kinds of fear.

As Saint Anselm says, in his *Book of the Doctrines*, all beginners have first of all the fear of a slave, for from such fear there comes the fear of sons. Blessed is he to whom is given the fear of God. For this fear is the foundation of faith, the beginning of charity and the first step toward Divine wisdom. As it is written in the Book of Wisdom: « The beginning of wisdom is the fear of God, »—that is, it is the gate of conversion. As Cassiodorus says, we enter into the presence of God by means of fear, as through a door. And Saint Bernard, in the *Book of the Songs*, says: « The sweetness of God first comes to the soul, not when He teaches her to know Him, but when He inspires her to fear Him ». And John Cassian says in the fourth book of his *Institutes*: « The beginning of our salvation, and the safeguard thereof, is fear; for by fear we come to the beginning of our conversion, and the cleansing of the soul from the vices, and the safeguarding of the virtues, wherein men are instructed on their way toward perfection. » Wherefore we must remember that, as the Master of

the Sentences says, in his third book and in the thirty-fourth distinction thereof, there are four kinds of fear, whereby we are converted to God or led away from Him. And these are as follows: worldly or human fear, slavish fear, the fear of beginners, and chaste or filial fear.

Human fear, as Cassiodorus says, comes to us when we are afraid to suffer perils of the flesh or to lose the good things of the world; and when we sin and offend God that we may not lose them. This fear is evil, proceeding from an overweening love of self and of this present life. The second kind of fear is that of the slave, whereof we now speak. As Saint Augustine says, it comes through fear of Hell, or of some temporal punishment, whereby a man is withdrawn from sin. This slavish fear withdraws not the will from sin, neither is there charity therein. By this fear alone none can be saved; but when charity is added thereto it drives it forth. He that does that which is right through fear of punishment loves not God, and is not to be reckoned among the sons of God. Yet we must consider that, albeit charity abides not with this fear, it is yet a doorway and a path thereto, as we read in Ecclesiastes: «The fear of God is the beginning of love»; and Saint Augustine says: «The fear of God makes ready a place for charity, and, when charity begins to dwell in the soul, fear is driven forth, though not at once completely; as charity increases, even so does

fear decrease. Where there is great love there is little fear. And where no fear is, there is perfection of love».

The third kind of fear is called filial, or chaste, and this is that fear which we have of offending our Spouse, of His delaying to come to us, or of His departure, so that we are bereft of His presence. This fear arises from true love of God, as the prophet says: «The fear of the Lord is holy and abides for ever».

On the difference between these two kinds of fear, namely slavish and filial, Saint Augustine, commenting upon the first canonical epistle of Saint John, writes thus; «There is the fear which is cast forth by charity, and there is another and a chaste fear which abides for ever. For some men fear God that they be not damned in Hell, and this fear puts charity into the soul, which gradually drives it forth. If thou fearest solely by reason of punishment, thou lovest not God, for thou desirest not that which is good, but withdrawest thyself from evil for fear of punishment, correctest thyself and only then beginnest to desire good. And by reason of that desire there comes to thee a chaste fear, so that thou fearest to lose this very good. Let us take as an example two married women. The one would fain commit adultery, but fears lest her husband come, and because she loves iniquity his presence is very bitter to her. The other desires not to be befouled

in any manner by adultery, and because she loves her husband she desires his presence. Both these women have fear, the first lest her husband come, the second lest he depart. The one fears to be chastened, the other to be abandoned and forsaken. By this example we may know slavish fear, which is cast forth by charity, and filial or chaste fear, which abides for ever.

The fourth kind of fear is called the fear of beginners, and it is, as it were, the mean between the two kinds above mentioned. For slavish fear, as has been said, is that whereby a man ceases from sin through fear of punishment. Filial fear is that whereby he restrains himself and withdraws himself from sin for fear of offending God; for it pertains to sons who fear lest they offend their fathers. The fear of beginners is that whereby a man abstains and withholds himself from sinning on two accounts, namely, lest he offend God and lest he suffer the pains of Hell. Saint Bernard says thereof that it has two eyes: with the right eye it looks upward, fearing to be withdrawn from God through sin, and with the left eye it looks down, fearing to be damned and to suffer the punishment of Hell. This fear of beginners, which is termed 'initial', pertains to the first estate, wherein is the beginning of filial fear which comes through the beginning of charity; yet it is not made perfect in them, for they have not come as yet to the perfection of charity. Further, Saint Thomas says

that the fear of beginners is to the fear of sons as charity which is imperfect to charity which is perfect: they differ not in essence, but in degree: the one is of beginners and the other is of the perfect. These kinds of fear we have here described that thou mayest know which of them is thine, and, leaving the fear of the slave thou mayest approach that of the son.

CHAPTER XI

Of the things which cause us to fear and which we must fear always.

THERE are many things, most beloved brethren, which we must fear, and of these some are far more perilous than others, whereof we will briefly reckon the most important, that we may keep ourselves from them most effectively.

These, then, are the things that a man should fear:

The changefulness and instability of this world, wherein a man may never remain in one state, nor know if it be worthy of love or of hatred; since, if our Lord should forsake us, the devil in a twinkling of an eye would lead us astray.

The war of our own flesh, of the world and of the devil, which is continually waged against the spirit of man.

The weakness and negligence which we show every day in resisting these foes, in doing penance, and in making progress on our way.

The rigour of God's judgment, as was shown in the fall of Lucifer, who for a single sin that he committed was cast from Heaven eternally. How much more, then, shall they who have committed many sins be forbidden to enter Heaven! Again, we see

this rigour in the sin of our father Adam, who for one sin that he committed was driven from the earthly Paradise, when the Gates of Heaven were shut until they were opened by the sacred death of our Lord Jesus Christ. In this death and passion the justice of God appeared more terrible and powerful still, for He forsook His most blessed Son, leaving Him in the hands of cruel men, as we know from the dreadful words which He spake while on the Cross, saying: « My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me? » If this justice was so terrible and so severe in the green wood of one that was full of virtues and so greatly loved by the Father, what shall it be in us who are dry wood, bereft of virtues and full of sins? Again, this rigour of God's justice appeared in the Flood, when the whole world perished, with the exception of eight men only who were saved.

Further, a man must fear:

The uncertainty concerning the time when he will leave this world; for no man knows where he shall die, nor when, nor how; nor if he shall die well or ill.

The judgment to come, when the Judge will be One that cannot be deceived, neither can any escape Him, nor bend Him to pity by any offering, neither is there appeal whatsoever from His sentence.

The sharpness of the pains of Purgatory, which, according to Saint Augustine, exceed any punishment of this world.

The dread sight of the devils and the pains of Hell, and the fire thereof, which is unquenchable.

The everlasting separation from the most beloved citizens of Heaven.

The wailing and groaning of those that are in Hell, for they have no consolation, but are as helpless in Hell as sheep that are devoured by death.

The knowledge and confusion which comes from sin. The loathing which a man shall have for himself and for all the things that are done in the whole world.

The eternal pains of Hell, for therein is no redemption.

The eternal sundering of a man from the joys of glory, and the loss of all hope that he may reach it.

The hardening of the mind; for one that is in Hell is hardened in evil, and thenceforward desires not any good thing.

The gnashing of teeth for the greatness of the anguish that belongs to such as are in Hell.

The imprisonment and captivity of those that are in Hell, for they cannot at their desire move from the place wherein they are.

The worm of remorse, which ever gnaws the conscience of the damned, by reason of the good things which they failed to do, of the causes for offence that they gave, and of the sins that they wrought.

Wherefore, brethren, let us lift up our eyes to Heaven and pray, saying:

Jesu Christe redemptor pie: qui sumus causa tuae viae, ne perdas nos in illa die. That is to say: 'O Jesus Christ, most merciful Redeemer, since Thou didst take for us the Way of the Cross, suffer us not to be lost on that day, the Day of Judgment.'

CHAPTER XII

Of the distribution of our meditations throughout the week, according to the Purgative Way.

The devout religious, and especially the beginner, must exercise himself for the most part in the Purgative Way; and, that his exercises may be ordered and determinate, we shall divide the meditations of the Purgative Way aforementioned, for a whole week, in this manner.

On Monday, consideration shall be made of Sin; on Tuesday, of Death; on Wednesday, of Hell; on Thursday, of Judgment; on Friday, of the Passion; on Saturday, of Our Lady; on Sunday, of Glory.

On Monday we must practise the remembrance of our sins, according to three elements of the Purgative Way, namely, the asperative way, the compunctive way and the elevative way. The exercises of these three kinds may be practised after the following manner:

Justice and judgment, as the Prophet David says, are a preparation for the throne of the Lord. When, therefore, the soul desires to soar through affection of the will to perfect union with the heavenly Spouse, and to be fed with crumbs from the bread of angels, whereon the blessed Spirits feed in heavenly glory, while yet it is in the wretchedness of this mortal

life, it must needs have three offices, whereby through Divine grace it may gradually rise by the ladder of heavenly contemplation. For the blessed Saint Dionysius, in his book on the Angelical Orders, says that the angels have a threefold office, namely, to cleanse, to enlighten and to make perfect. Wherefore, the soul that desires, while yet in this mortal life, to rise to that lofty state of celestial happiness, wherein the angels are refreshed by the vision of Divine glory, must labour, first, to be cleansed; secondly, to be enlightened by the rays of Divine splendour; and thirdly, to rise to the highest and noblest grade of the desire of the will, and thus be perfected and made complete by the highest state of love, which shall make it one spirit with God.

Wherefore, we must first speak of the first Way, — namely, that of Purgation, — wherein the exercitant bewails his sins, and the offences which he has committed against God. In so doing, let him with tears implore the mercy of God. In this way the conscience is cleansed, which cleansing pertains to beginners. Further, in this way the heart is prepared and renewed without teaching of mortal man, giving itself solely to the study of heavenly doctrine; for however simple and unlettered a man may be, this exercise will make him to rise aloft, without fail, by Divine instruction, — an instruction not of theory or science, but of practice and experience. So before that wisdom, which is God, can dwell in the soul as upon its own seat

(for it is written that the soul of the just is the seat of wisdom) it is needful that judgment and justice come to that soul. Judgment, for as by mortal sin the soul has sundered itself from its Creator, unworthily despising and forsaking Him for creature love, now it must humble itself completely, that by its humility it may move Divine pity to take mercy on it, even as it moved the justice and vengeance of the sovereign Judge by its own contempt for Him. Justice, for the soul that has exchanged the delights of its Creator for creature delights must have great sorrow, and its satisfaction for the wrongs which it has wrought against the goodness and majesty of God must be at least as great as though the wrongs had been wrought against man.

Wherefore, brethren, since it is necessary to work judgment and justice within ourselves, let each one of you, at the accustomed hour, after Matins on Monday, go to the place appointed, kneel there, make the sign of the holy Cross upon his forehead, lips and breast, and repeat this antiphon: *Veni, sancte Spiritus, reple tuorum corda fidelium, et tui amoris in eis ignem accende.* And then say three times this verse: *Deus in adjutorium meum intende, Domine ad adjuvandum me festina.* And then, recollecting his spirit, reckon himself a guilty man, and, with great fear, place himself before God as before a judge that is about to condemn him. Bring to thy memory diligently and consider how God is offended by each

sin of thine, and at this remembrance have thou compunction and awaken thyself to devotion, according to the first element of the Purgative Way which we have called asperative.

At the beginning of thy prayer thou must wound thy heart by remembering thy sins; and, reproaching thyself, and meditating and wounding thyself with thy remorse, say to thyself as follows:

O my soul, think now and consider diligently how each sin of thine displeases God. Look diligently and see how pride flung Lucifer from Heaven, how disobedience drove Adam from Paradise, how lust whelmed Sodom and Gomorrah, and how the whole world was destroyed by the Flood.

Think likewise how the Son of God, thy Saviour, suffered a most bitter death because of sin, that sin should not remain unpunished, nor the justice of God unsatisfied.

Think likewise how God cannot judge thee save by the deserving of thy works alone.

Consider that God in His justice can neither be comprehended neither can decline nor err; that He metes out punishment to the evil as well as glory to the good, wherefore He will reward thee according to thy works.

Think likewise of the sins thou didst commit before thy conversion: how many they were, those of thought, consent, delight, word and work; for so many are they that thou canst not count them.

Think how grievous they were, and above all, the sins of the flesh—but think not long upon these lest in place of contrition they bring thee shameful delight.

Think how grave they are, for by them thou hast offended and crucified Christ afresh.

Think likewise of the sins committed since thy conversion, and of how negligent and how lukewarm thou hast been, for how many years having made no progress.

Look upon thy sins one by one, and in the presence of God confess them. And as thou dost examine these things in thy thoughts, consider diligently how little satisfaction thou hast made for thy sins, how small has been thy contrition, how few have been thy works of reparation. And know of a truth that, whether in this life or in the next, thou shalt pay even to the uttermost farthing. Of this Saint Bernard says that in the next world it will not suffice to pay a hundred times, whereas in this world thou mayest make full payment once. Then when thou, a sinner, above all if now thou beginnest this new life, dost turn over these things in thy thoughts, and feel thyself wounded by fear, and full of grief within, not for the pains of Hell which thou dost merit, but because thou hast offended thy loving God, thou must humble thy soul and bury thy face in thy hands when thou art upon thy knees, counting thyself unworthy to look up to Heaven and directing

thy heart to God. Then shalt thou say with deep contrition: «O, most merciful Father, I am that prodigal son who has committed all these sins against Thy majesty, and very thankless to Thee have I been. For Thou, Lord, didst create me innocent, and I have become loathsome, foul and full of sins. Thou, Lord, wert crucified, wounded and humbled for me; and I have striven to exalt myself. Thou, Lord, wert naked upon the Cross; and I have adorned myself with vain and lascivious clothing. To Thee, Lord, they gave gall and vinegar to drink; and I have delighted in meats and drinks that were delicate. Thou, Lord, hast toiled and laboured greatly, while I have been idle and full of shame. What then, O Lord, shall I do? Shall I perchance despair? Doth not the prophet say in Thy Name «I desire not the death of a sinner, but rather that he may be converted and live»? Iron that is black and mirrors that are tarnished can be cleansed; wherefore I, by the Purgative Way, will cleanse myself with the file of contrition, confession and satisfaction. And as I have exalted myself in the past, now I will be the outcast and the scorn of men. To conquer avarice I will renounce all possessions. To conquer the lusts of the flesh, I will afflict myself with fasts and vigils, hunger and thirst. By three ways will I purge myself, - namely, with the sighing of prayer, with the fire of Thy passion and with the heat of Thy love.

When the soul has been exercised after this

manner, according to the first element of the Purgative Way, and remembrance has been made of sin, with heavy grief, then let the soul that is full of pain and bitterness pass to the second element, which is called compunctive. And let it say, with lively affection, as follows:

I grieve, O Lord, because I have lost Thy friendship, have despised Thy goodness, have been consenting to sin and have lived a life of guilt. I grieve that I have spent amiss both my time and the strength of my body and my soul. That I have transgressed Thy commandments, and the rules of Holy Church and of my superiors. That I have been weak in resisting sin, in doing penance and in making progress in virtue. That I have been very neglectful in work and prayer, in reading and meditation. That I have ofttimes fallen into the habit, custom and intention of committing sin. That I have been very ungrateful and undutiful; for ofttimes hast Thou pardoned my sins, and I, wretched one that I am, have again and again returned to them. That I have destroyed all charity within myself, for many times have I destroyed it by the manifold sins that I have committed. Lastly, that I have ceased from fearing Thee, having presumed to commit such great and horrible sins against so great a Lord.

When after this manner thou hast humbled thyself, with compunction and confusion of soul, then say thou this prayer:

« O Jesus Christ, my Lord and my God, a vile and wretched sinner am I, the most unhappy and abominable of all wretched sinners, for in sins so many and so great have I offended Thy Majesty, that I could not be sufficient to count them; for they are more in number than the sands of the sea, and for their number are innumerable. »

And when thou hast prayed in this manner or in any other, do thou sigh and groan with all thy strength, that thy heart may be the more inclined to contrition and devotion; for even as a file cleans and refines iron, taking from it all its rust, even so do sighs and groans take the rust from our sins and vices, and cleanse them wholly through the dew of Divine grace. Wherefore say thou with sighs and groans: « Whither, O Lord, shall I flee from the face of Thy majesty? For if I go up into Heaven, there do I find Thee; and if I descend into Hell, I cannot be hidden from Thee ». Say thou likewise in thy prayer: « What shall I do, O Lord? Shall I perchance slay myself? Not so, O Lord; for I know that Thou art merciful to all that turn to Thee in truth; and Thy mercies are over all the works of Thy hands. » And if by these means aforementioned thou canst not move thyself to sorrow, fail thou not to make remembrance of them briefly each night with thine exercises. For it is sufficient for our Lord that a man strive to do all that in him lies. And further, our Lord awaits ofttimes the end of His

servants' work, and withdraws Himself, giving neither contrition nor consolation, that trial may be made of faith and patience, and that God Himself may give the greater sorrow for sins which have been committed.

Having exercised thyself after this manner according to the element of compunction, despair thou not of the mercy of God, but lift up thy soul in hope, according to the element which is called elevative.

With great confidence lift thou up thy face, which, as thou didst kneel, was buried in thy hands; and, having raised it, take thou a little rest and recollect thy soul. Then with inward sweetness lift up thy heart to praise the Lord, imploring His mercy, and considering and praising His greatness and nobility in these five words, which are of great devotion: *Domine bone, pulcherrime, dulcis, misericors.* That is to say: 'O Lord, that art good, beautiful, sweet and merciful.'

For in order to attain the grace of God, without which it is impossible to have His mercy, it behoves thee to make thyself like to the jesters that frequent the courts of great lords; who, when they long to have some temporal thing, begin by praising their prince after many manners, and only then do they ask for that which they desire. Make thyself like them, a jongleur of the spirit, praising God, that thou mayest attain pardon for thy sins. And as God is of so great excellence that His essence cannot be named

by human tongue, we speak of Him by His works, and in them we praise Him for His greatness and nobility.

First, then, we praise Him, because He is the beginning and the source of every creature, saying *O Domine*, which signifies « O Lord, that art Creator of all creatures ». Then we say *Bone*, according as He reveals Himself to the angels and to all the holy souls in blessedness, saying: « O Sovereign Goodness, Whom all the angels and holy souls gaze upon and contemplate in eternal blessedness. » Thirdly, we speak of Him as He shows Himself to all the creatures, both rational and irrational, and as He is sovereign Ruler over them all; and herein we praise the loveliness which He has given them in creation, saying *Pulcherrime*, — that is: « O Beauty of all creatures ». We say likewise *Dulcis*, which is: « O Sweetness of all the just ». And we say *Misericors*, that is: « O Merciful to all sinners, have mercy upon me a sinner, forgiving me all my sins. »

When thou hast praised the Lord after all these five manners, then mayest thou surely ask of Him pardon for all thy sins. After this manner we are taught to pray and to ask for that which we need in the Book of the Canticles, where the Spouse says to His Beloved: *Vox tua dulcis, et facies tua decora*. That is to say, « Thy voice is sweet and thy face beautiful », namely, through having been cleansed from the darkness which erstwhile darkened her. In

each one of these five words may the heavenly Spouse be praised after an especial manner, and these words are convenient to the devout soul, so that thou must have them ever in thy memory, and go not wandering in a wilderness of words whensoever thou desirest to pray. But be thou recollected within thyself, and wander not among many things that are without. Then shalt thou be enabled to pray, saying: *O Domine, bone, pulcherrime, dulcis, misericors, miserere hujus peccatoris quem redemisti pretioso sanguine Filii tui*. Which is to say: « O Lord, Thou art good, beautiful, sweet and merciful: have mercy upon this sinner whom thou didst redeem by the precious blood of Thy Son ». And, as thou dost repeat these words, let thy one consideration be to obtain pardon for the sins wherein thou hast offended. And since it is a thing of great merit, and well pleasing to God, thou must pray in these same words for all estates of men, both Christian and heathen, saying: « O Lord, Thou art good, beautiful, sweet and merciful: have mercy upon all sinners and convert unbelievers to the knowledge of thy Holy Catholic Faith ». At times, moreover, thou must begin thy exercises in this manner. Having done this, implore thou likewise the mercy of our Redeemer, and cleanse thyself by setting between God and thyself His precious death and passion, saying: « O Lord, for the holy passion of Thy most precious Son, Who was offered for me upon the Cross, have

mercy upon me, a sinner». Or this: «By the Holy Incarnation of Thy most precious Son». Or: «By the Holy Nativity,» according to the meditation of the day of the week upon the life of our Lord.

Cleanse thyself likewise through the prayers of the saints, and especially of Our Lady, saying: «O piteous Virgin, Mother of my Lord and Saviour: thou that art very holy, humble and merciful above all the saints that are in Heaven, and inclinest thyself to hear the prayers of thy servants and art most pitiful in helping them: if thou, O Lady, dost incline thyself before the Divine Majesty to pray for me who am a great sinner, full of pride, and worse than all sinners else, then, O Lady, all the court of Heaven will incline themselves with thee, saying: Bend, O Lord, the ears of Thy sovereign mercy to the supplications of Thy most holy Mother; for it is very meet and right that, through her intercession and prayer and love, grace and benediction should be given to those that are miserable and lost: heal Thou, then, him that is sick and pardon Thou Thy guilty one».

Say thou furthermore: «O most merciful Virgin, if I am unworthy, thy worthiness is very great. If I am proud, thou art humble. If I am foul, thou art very pure. If the stench of my sins is great, thou art a sweet smelling savour. If I am carnal and full of lust, thou art a Virgin most chaste. If I am a great sinner, thou art most holy. Wherefore, from

the depths of my heart I entreat thee, by the sorrows which thou didst suffer for thy Son's sake with most fervent love, look upon me, and intercede and supplicate for me who am miserable and forsaken. By thy flight into Egypt, I entreat this of thee. By the loss of thy dearly beloved Son during the three days when He was disputing with the doctors in the Temple. By that sorrow that was thine when He foretold to thee His death and passion in Bethany. By that most bitter word which He said to thee when He was hanging upon the Cross: « Woman, behold thy Son ». By the most bitter drink of gall and vinegar which they gave Him. By the piercing of His precious side. And by the descent of His precious body into thy loving arms. By all these, may He forgive me my sins, and grant me His blessed grace in this present life, and His everlasting glory in the world to come. »

When this is done, turn thou to the saints after the manner following:

On Monday, consider all the angels in general, and especially thy guardian angel, whom thou must ever hold in great reverence and devotion, saying some devout prayer to him daily. Commend thyself likewise to the saint whose feast is on that day.

On Tuesday, commend thyself to Our Lady, after the manner aforesaid, to the holy patriarchs and prophets, apostles, evangelists and disciples of the Lord, taking one of them for thy principal advocate,

together with the saint whose feast is on that day.

On Wednesday, invoke our Lady and all the holy martyrs.

On Thursday, Our Lady and the confessors.

On Friday, the painful and most bitter passion of the Lord.

On Saturday, Our Lady and all virgins.

On Sunday, worship thou the most holy Trinity; invoke Him by His omnipotence, and by the wisdom of the Son, and by the goodness of the Holy Spirit, considering the great loftiness of God and His marvellous dispensation concerning the children of men. And when, after this manner, thou hast implored His mercy, lift up thy soul, adoring, magnifying and thanking Him for the benefits which He has given thee, and chiefly for such as thou hast received on that day; for contrition and for devotion, and for all other gifts that He has given thee.

Say thou then: «O God most high, my soul adores Thee and magnifies Thee, offering Thee thanks for so many graces and gifts which I have received of Thee. O Lord, with my inmost heart, I offer myself to Thy mercy.»

Having done this, strike thy breast, and say thrice: *Deus propitius esto mihi peccatori.* Then, rising to thy feet with great reverence, say thou the Psalm: *Laudate Dominum in sanctis ejus.* Or else the Psalm: *Lauda anima mea.* Or the Psalm: *Benedic anima mea*

Domino, to the verse: *Renovabitur ut aquilae juventus tua,* together with the *Gloria Patri,* and the *Pater Noster* and *Ave Maria,* saying finally: *Et ne nos inducas in tentationem: sed libera nos a malo. Domine exaudi orationem meam: et clamor meus ad te veniat. Oremus: Deus ad quem digne laudandum, etc.* Or the prayer of the Holy Trinity: *Omnipotens sempiterne Deus, qui dedisti famulis tuis, etc.* And in this manner ends this exercise of the Purgative Way.

Thou must note that, although each one of these ways has a determinate name and a manner proper for proceeding therein, it is in no way forbidden thee, in each one of them, the grace of God preventing thee, to exercise thyself in all three,—namely, in the Purgative Way, the Illuminative Way and the Unitive Way,—confessing thine own miseries, giving thanks to God and lifting up thy soul to adore and magnify Him. And see that when thou hast finished the exercise aforementioned thou permit not thy thoughts immediately to go astray; but study how thou mayest keep thy heart in its strength and vigour. Let not vague and inconstant thoughts or vain mirth overcome thee, lest through such vain and inconstant cogitations thy soul lose the gain which it has received in compunction. But set thy thought upon the life of the Lord, according to the meditation for that day, or upon some other thing that is holy and devout.

CHAPTER XIII

Of the meditations of the exercitant on Tuesday for the awakening of the soul, at the beginning of prayer, after Matins.

WHEN thou hast come to the place of prayer, most beloved brother, hast signed thyself with the holy Cross, and recollected thy spirit, according as we said above, make thou thy meditation upon death after this manner, that thou mayest ever be prepared for the hour thereof.

Think first how suddenly it will come, as a thief comes when thou least awaitest him and art least prepared for him: when thou art most confident of living longer and hast planned to do many things.

Revolve oft in thy heart the manner wherein we draw nigh to death, and think of it from time to time as though thou hadst now to die; so shalt thou feel more deeply the things which follow.

Think how death will be preceded by an illness most severe, and how all other maladies are messengers to make thee think upon this.

Think upon the severity of that illness and the affright of thy natural inclination, which desires not to die but to live.

Think how, when thou knowest thyself to be about to pass from this life, or when the physicians tell it thee, or when thou feelest within thyself that

thou art dying, thy conscience will greatly cry out, and how great will be thy remorse that thou didst not prepare thyself for this when thou wert able. Then will all the sins that thou hast committed come to thy remembrance.

Think how great will be thy pain for each one of these sins, and for the evil passions which thou hast not conquered.

Consider with what great desire thou wouldst yearn for an hour or a year of health, wert thou now constrained in the grip of death, and bound by thy vices and passions.

Consider how brief the time that is past will appear to thee, when thou comest to this hour of passing hence, and comparest it with Eternity whereto thou art passing. For all thy life will then appear to thee but a dream that is gone, and all thy days, — nay, all time itself, — will seem to thee but as a short space: namely, that wherein thou wouldst walk the distance of half a league.

How great will be thy pain and thy sorrow, when thou seest that for so short a span of delight thou hast lost the joys of eternity! How bitter to thee will be the separation, when thou dost sunder thyself from those things which in thy life of vice thou didst love: namely, the honour and high estate which thou didst seek here below with all thy strength, the delights which thou didst love and other things like to these.

Think thou upon the appearance of a dying man: how all his body becomes black and motionless, and his eyes grow sunken.

Think how the devils stand by him like lions ready for their prey, awaiting the departure of his soul.

Consider how the soul, as it departs from the body, looks fearfully into the region which it has never seen; for it knows not whither it must go, or how many devils await it. How cruelly it is torn from the body, and how gladly it would return to the body if it might! But it may not, for all the doors of the senses are closed, wherefore it is compelled to leave the body and pass through the ranks of its enemies.

Think how the evil spirit of every vice will attack it, each seeking therein that which is its own. The spirit of pride will seek pride. The spirit of lust will seek lust. And in this manner each of the spirits will seek its own prey.

Lastly and finally, consider how the soul that has left the body will be brought forthwith before the judgment seat, how sentence will be given, a sentence that shall never be revoked but shall stand eternally. For where the tree falls, there shall it lie for ever.

Consider how, so soon as the body is buried in the tomb, it is forgotten for evermore, for it has been in this world as the guest of a night, and,

having gone from the world, its memory has vanished for ever.

After this thou mayest think, in contrary wise, upon the deaths of righteous men. For, when they see that they are about to pass from this world, they rejoice in the testimony of a good conscience, and are glad because they are to be freed from the miseries of this present life. And since they are not tied and bound with carnal desires here below, they sorrow not that they must go hence.

When thou hast meditated, my brother, upon these matters, or upon some part of them which shall suffice to awaken in thee compunction and devotion, then do thou take upon thyself the person of a criminal, or of a slave that has offended his lord, and with feelings of humility and grief make thou a prayer from the depth of thy heart, as was set forth above, confessing thy misery, and entreating mercy. Say thou: *O Domine, Bone, Pulcherrime, Dulcis, Misericors, Miserere hujus peccatoris quem redimisti pretioso sanguine Filii tui.* Which, as was said above, under the last day, signifies: «O Lord that art good, beautiful, sweet and merciful, have mercy upon this sinner whom thou didst redeem by the precious blood of Thy Son.»

And, when thou hast said this, entreat the mercy of our Redeemer, placing between God and thyself His precious death and passion, and saying the words aforementioned: «O Lord, by the holy passion of

Thy most precious Son, Who was offered for me upon the Cross, have mercy upon me a sinner». And when this is done, turn thou to Our Lady, entreating her aid, as was said above, and afterwards to the saints, according to the day of the week, and especially to the saint whose solemnity is being kept upon the day. And thus, in adoration, praise and thanksgiving, shalt thou bring this exercise to an end, in the manner which is described for Monday.

CHAPTER XIV

Of the meditations of the exercitant on Wednesday, at the beginning of prayer, after Matins.

On Wednesday, when thou hast come to the place of prayer, signed thyself with the holy Cross and recollected thy spirit, as we said above, make thou thy meditation upon the pains of Hell, after this manner.

Think, brother, upon the pains of Hell, and upon Hell itself, according to the figures whereby the saints have described it.

Represent to thyself a terrible abyss, a place beneath the earth, a pit very deep and full of flames.

Think of a most terrible city, very great and in complete darkness, yet afire with flames which are most terrible and dark, from the midst whereof come shrieks and dreadful cries; for all that are therein do cry out by reason of their pains, which no tongue of man can describe.

By these and such like similitudes consider thou the great cruelty of their torments. For, as Saint Augustine says, our fire differs as greatly from the fire of Hell as does a painted fire from a real one. Think likewise of cold, and of insufferable odours; think of the gnashing of teeth, the groans, plaints, and blasphemies addressed to God, all the which

things bear witness to the cruelty of these torments.

Think likewise upon the multitude of these pains. For in Hell there is a fire most fierce and inextinguishable, an intolerable cold, odours insufferable, darkness that may be felt, and torment of each of the senses. The eyes are tormented by the gestures of the devils, and other terrible things that shall be seen. The hearing, by cries, groans and sounds of wailing.

Think of the miserable companionship of Hell, and the cruelty of the tormentors, who are without pity soever, and never weary in giving tortures, nor are ever moved to mercy. Nay, they insult the tortured, saying: «Where is now thy glory? Where thy high estate? Where is thy pride? Where are thy lustful delights?» And even so with the other sins.

In each of his members is the damned soul tortured, and especially in those wherewith it sinned. The inmost pains of Hell are the pains of remorse of the conscience, and of the worm thereof that shall never die. Who is he that can fully conceive the sorrow of those that are there, who were in this world for so short a time and fled not from those pains by embracing the petty trials of this life?

Think how the inmost passions of the damned shall triumph over them, for they shall have marvellous rage and envy, like ravening dogs. Likewise they shall remember their past sins and their former

delights, that they may have increased torment. And they shall lament, saying: « What profit have we had from our pride, from our lust, from avarice, from temporal glory and from all the delights of the flesh? »

Consider thou the everlastingness of these torments, which shall never have an end, — nay, not after a thousand million years — for there is no redemption from these, nor any end to them.

Wherefore, most beloved brother, thou shalt awaken thy conscience by the meditation aforesaid, and then shalt thou turn to the Lord, saying in thy heart as follows: « O height of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how incomprehensible are thy judgments! How many, O God, are in Hell for one sin only! And I that have committed so many, what merit have I, O Lord? Most truly do I merit condemnation, for I am worthy to be in every way tormented and unworthy of any favour. »

In this way, or by the use of words like to these, do thou speak from the depths of thy heart, humbling thy soul before the Lord, in Whose sight and presence thou art, for thou must firmly believe in the presence of God, when thou givest thyself to prayer. And the more thou dost humble and condemn thyself, the more quickly shalt thou be absolved and the higher shall be the estate to which thou shalt be raised. Wherefore have compunction and grief ere thou lift up thy soul in hope and with confidence of pardon. Form thou thy prayer devoutly in the

depths of thy heart, taking upon thee the person of a sinner. And with feelings of humility and fear, have remembrance of thy miseries, and entreat the mercy of God. Then give thou consideration to His benefits, according as we have said already.

CHAPTER XV

Of the meditations of the exercitant on Thursday, at the beginning of prayer, after Matins.

On Thursday, when thou hast come to the place of prayer, sign thyself with the holy Cross, and recollect thy spirit, according as we said above concerning Monday. Then make thou thy meditation upon the last judgment after this manner.

Consider how great will be the terror at that time, when sinners shall hear the last trump, and see lightnings, and hear the dreadful sounds of thunders. So great will be their terror upon that day that none may describe it.

Consider how great will be the wrath of the just Judge Who will appear before those that have offended Him, and how great will be the affright of all evil men when He comes.

Consider how bitter will be the great separation that shall be made, when the righteous, the humble and the meek shall be set upon the right hand, and the proud, the envious and the lustful upon the left hand, so that from that time forth they shall never again meet.

Think of the fear, the dread and the wonder that shall come to the proud and haughty of this world, when they shall see themselves cast down, wretched,

poor, reviled and despised by all, and those whom they themselves held to be despised sitting at the right hand of Christ in glory. Then shall they say within themselves, in great anguish: « Are these then they whom aforetime we had in derision? » And on the other side the righteous shall be wholly unmoved as they look upon those that afflicted them and caused them bitter suffering.

Consider how an account shall be given in that place of every word and thought. For search shall be made in all Jerusalem with candles: that is to say, those who now appear as saints shall be examined there, and all that was hidden in them shall be made manifest. Angels and devils shall be the witnesses thereof, and these shall show forth to us all the things that we did in time past, in every place and moment of our lives. Likewise shall testimony be given against sinners by their own sins, and by the whole world.

Consider how our Redeemer will show forth in that place the marks of His Passion, and how with those same marks He will confront all such as have despised Him. Think likewise upon the most dreadful and irrevocable doom, when He shall say: « Depart from Me, ye accursed of My Father, into everlasting fire ». And upon the most wondrous invitation which shall be made for the righteous to the Eternal Supper, when He shall say to them: « Come, ye blessed of My Father, possess the kingdom that has been laid up for you since the foundation of the world ».

Consider how great things are works of goodness and mercy, since it is of these alone that our Redeemer appears to take account at the judgment. Remember how the righteous shall go to eternal life, and the wicked to everlasting torment, and how these two places, — namely, Paradise and Hell — shall forever remain divided by reason of the great abyss that is between them.

Then, brother, when thou hast awakened thy conscience by the meditation aforementioned, or by some part thereof, turn thou to the Lord and say: « O Lord, Who is he that shall be able to escape from a judgment so just and so terrible? Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified ». And with these words, or with others like to them, make thou thy prayer according as we have said above.

CHAPTER XVI

Of the meditations of the exercitant on Friday, at the beginning of prayer, after Matins.

On Friday, when thou hast come to the place of prayer, sign thyself with the holy Cross and recollect thy spirit, according as was said concerning Monday. Make thou then this meditation of how our Redeemer prayed in the Garden, and think of these things as though thou thyself wert praying there. Think first how, when the Supper in Jerusalem was ended, in that chamber on Mount Sion, our Saviour went out into the garden with His disciples. Remember with what loving-kindness He spake to them, saying: « Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation ». How He withdrew from them, and knowing all the things that were to come upon Him, armed Himself with the arms of prayer. And how, when He had entered upon His agony, the pain and fear in the most tender spot of His heart were so great that in all parts of His body He sweated blood; by the which sweat is signified the greatness of His inward griefs and the sadness of His heart.

Consider how many and how great were His sorrows, and the causes thereof, and how cruel were the swords that pierced His heart; and how the cause of all this was in the sins of the elect, whether past,

present or to come; the which He saw every one, more clearly, openly and distinctly than any single thing can be seen by the human mind.

Consider how in that agony He makes satisfaction for the wrongs done to the Father by each and every sin of the elect, offering Him a unique atonement for each, and grieving for the offences committed against the Father. How at that time all thy sins were laid open before Him, and how greatly each and every one of them grieved Him, so that it was for thee that He offered to the Father the atonement of justice.

Consider likewise the qualities in our Saviour whence proceeded such heavy suffering.

How that, first, He was Son of God, and grieved greatly at the wrong done to His Father. Secondly, that He was the Mediator of peace between God and man, His love for this peace being as great as His grief for the enmity and wrath which come from sin. Thirdly, He was the Spouse of souls, and loved their beauty above all things; wherefore He was broken with grief for them. Fourthly, He was the Restorer of grace, the which was lost through sin. Fifthly, He was the universal Redeemer, and it behoved Him to make atonement and satisfaction to Divine justice, so that no sin should remain unatoned for.

Consider the sharpness of the swords of grief that pierced His heart. For in the first place He saw the

kingdom of His glory robbed of its citizens by divers sins, so that they that should enter therein would be but few. Secondly, He saw the work of grace destroyed by sin in the souls of men, and His own holy passion in but few made effectual; and as He was grace itself, He grieved for these offences, as though they were His own destroyers. Thirdly, He grieved for our ingratitude, considering the offences of such as, having knowledge of their wondrous redemption, shame not to return to their sins, and crucify Him anew in themselves. Fourthly, He saw the gates of Hell opened, and looked upon all the damned, and upon those that should be damned, even to the end of the world. Fifthly, there were shown to Him all the pains, insults and mockings which should come to pass in His passion. Sixthly, there were shown to Him all the sufferings of His most holy Mother, and of His disciples; and the anguish, grief and sufferings of the martyrs, and of all the elect, for His love, even to the end of the world; and all these things were as swords plunged into His soul.

Consider the pains of His faculties, which must needs have exceeded all measure; the which pains were far, far greater than we may ever understand. Consider His infinite mercy with respect to us, and the plentifulness of the redemption and satisfaction which He made for us to God.

O hardest heart of man! How grievous will it be

for thee in the time to come, if thou canst not be broken at the sight of such wondrous signs of love; if love may not melt thee, and thou mayest not be drawn thereto by so many cords which should draw thee away from thy hardness and thy obstinacy.

Now therefore, brother, if thou hast awakened thy conscience with this meditation, turn thou to the Lord, falling down at His most holy feet; entreat His pardon for all thy sins, and for the coldness and unthankfulness that thou hast had towards Him; and purpose thou henceforth to warm thyself at so great a fire of love. Say thou with the Prophet: « With my memory will I remember, and my soul shall swoon within me », — that is to say, because of the things aforementioned. Then lie thou prostrate before Him, and let Him not depart until He shall have given thee His blessing. After which thou shalt proceed as has been set forth for the other days of the week.

CHAPTER XVII

Of the meditations of the exercitant on Saturday, at the beginning of prayer, after Matins.

On Saturday, when thou hast come to the place of prayer, sign thyself with the holy Cross and recollect thy spirit, as was said above concerning Monday. Make thou then thy meditation upon the grievous sorrows of Our Lady, after this manner.

Remember that if thou desirest to be her child, and to have her for thine advocate, thou must sorrow together with her. Thou must grieve for her sorrows, anguish, trials and afflictions, which she had all her life long, so that her whole life was a martyrdom of sorrow.

Consider her sorrow when she saw her blessed Son in the manger, wailing for the sharpness of the cold, and had naught wherewith to shelter Him. Likewise at the circumcision, when Simeon told her that a sword should pierce her own soul. At the flight into Egypt, at the loss of her blessed Son for three days, and throughout His life when she saw Him suffering hunger and many wants, yet not always being able to help Him.

Think how often she saw Him weeping, and herself wept with Him. How she saw Him weary with walking, hungering and thirsting, scorned and

blasphemed when He taught, and lain in wait for by His enemies. Were not these things perchance a most cruel martyrdom to her? Of a truth they were.

Think how often she heard Him speak of His death and passion. If Saint Peter and the other disciples were so much grieved thereby that they could no longer listen to Him, what were the feelings of the Mother who so greatly loved Him?

What were her feelings when she knew that Judas for money had betrayed Him, that the Jews had taken Him, and the Apostles had abandoned Him? When she saw Him led from one judge to another, condemned to bear the Cross upon His shoulders and sentenced to death. When she saw Him upon the Cross and heard Him speak, her heart pierced by the greatness of the sorrow of her wellbeloved Son. When she saw Him in agony and at the moment of yielding up His spirit. At the descent from the Cross, when she saw Him lying dead and cruelly wounded in her blessed arms? When she saw Him laid in the tomb. No tongue on earth can describe her sorrows then or tell their greatness.

When she remained in the little chamber with Saint John and the Marys and the other disciples who joined them afterwards, how sad and afflicted were they at the death and passion of the Lord, which had come to pass the day before. Consider these things as though thou wert present with her; and think diligently what a sight it is to behold the

queen of the world, and the princes and chieftains of the whole army of God, shut up there in a humble dwelling, filled with fear, bitterness and sorrow.

Think how they talked of these things among themselves with many sighs and much weeping. How great was the shame and confusion of the disciples because they had forsaken Him; above all of Saint Peter, who had denied Him; how all smote their breasts and besought Our Lady's pardon.

Think then how she would comfort them and strengthen them with words of consolation, saying: «The good Master and the faithful Shepherd has gone from us, and we remain here as orphans; but firmly do I believe that we shall quickly have Him with us once more. Ye know well the lovingkindness of my blessed Son, and how He loved you. Doubt not that ye will indeed be reconciled with Him, and that He will pardon you all your offences very willingly. For so great was the wrath of the multitude against Him, through the will of His Father, that the boldness of evil men prevailed; so that even had ye been with Him ye could not have aided Him; wherefore let not your hearts be troubled». With what shame Saint Peter would answer, saying: «In truth, Lady, it is even as thou sayest, for I, who had such confidence in myself, was seized in the palace of Caiaphas by such dread that I had hardly thought to have escaped; and so I denied Him, for-

getting the words which He had spoken to me, until He looked upon me».

Then, brother, when thou hast awakened thy conscience by the meditation aforementioned, turn thou to the Lord, entreating of Him pardon for all thy sins, because thou hast so many times denied Him, and turn thou to Our Lady and to all the other saints likewise, as we have said above.

CHAPTER XVIII

Of the meditations of the exercitant on Sunday, at the beginning of prayer after Matins.

On Sunday, when thou hast come to the place of prayer, hast signed thyself with the holy Cross, and recollected thy spirit according to the manner aforementioned, make thou thy meditation of the glory of Heaven after this manner.

Thou must think of the joys of Heaven, but, first of all, of that marvellous place which is the empyrean, being called thus by reason of its most marvellous brightness. Thou must think thereof by similitudes of the imagination, which have been conceived by the saints that our understanding may the better comprehend it.

That place, then, is as a very wondrous city, builded of purest gold and stones most precious. Each of the gates of that city is of a most beauteous pearl.

Within that city is the loveliest of gardens, adorned with the beauty of all the flowers that can be conceived: therein are lilies, roses, and other fairest flowers of such fragrance that no tongue can describe them. And these never fade, for summer and fragrance of perfume abide there for ever.

This home of eternal delights is always alike, without change soever; it is the abode of the saints, and contains all delights within itself.

What joy will be there, in the vision of the most Holy Trinity, in Whom shines forth the perfection of beauty, goodness and sweetness. In seeing Him thou shalt know all things that can be known. All that thou desirest shall be thine in that place; for in this vision shalt thou be beatified.

How great is the joy of the blessed ones in Heaven, who rejoice with great delight in the most clear and perfect contemplation of the Divine brightness, and rejoice likewise with great sweetness in the most delectable and sweet fruition of the Divine goodness; and this fruition is eternal and everlasting, for they have as their own, in very tranquil and sure possession, the Divine Majesty, nor need they ever fear to lose It.

Furthermore, they have the vision of the Humanity of our Redeemer, for He that was seen by mankind to be poor and humble and lowly shall be seen in Heaven both as Very Man and as the Most High God.

Likewise thou shalt rejoice there in the company of Our Lady, the Virgin Mary, and of all the saints, apostles, martyrs, virgins and confessors; and in their joys shalt thou rejoice as if they were thine own.

There, too, likewise shall thy body receive its gifts: namely, immortality, impassibility, agility and brightness. And thy soul shall have its gifts: namely, fulness of knowledge, justice and gladness.

How many things beside shalt thou attain through

these gifts! For thou shalt have security, with no fear of being cast out from that place, neither overcome by temptation, for of this thou shalt have none. Perfect liberty shall be thine, with health, delight, friendship, honour and concord; and, to conclude briefly, thou shalt have all that thou desirest, and that which thou desirest not thou shalt not have.

Wherefore, brother, when thou hast awakened thy conscience, and incited thy desire with these spurs of love, do thou sigh deeply, because thou hast strayed so far from so excellent a dwelling-place through thy guilt and sin. And, confessing thy miseries, turn thou to the Lord, with all thy heart, saying: «O Lord, draw me after Thee, and I shall run after the fragrance of Thine ointment». And after this manner turn thou to Our Redeemer and to Our Lady in thy prayer; and when thou hast entreated their mercy and given thanks, do thou bring thine exercises to an end, according as we have said concerning Monday.

CHAPTER XIX

Of the time that is necessary for the exercises of the Way described above, and how a man may know that he has purged himself.

We have spoken above of the Purgative Way, whereby the new disciple of Christ prepares himself to ascend to the goal of his desire, which is to come gradually to the union of his soul with God, the which is called true wisdom. And we have said also that he must accustom himself to this way with great study. But after he has for some time been accustomed thereto, — namely, for the space of a month, as Henry of Palma says in his *Mystical Theology*, — let him pass thence to think upon the love of Heaven, exercising himself in the second Way, which is called Illuminative, because it illumines the heart through careful consideration of the benefits of God.

And, though he be a great sinner, yet let him not fear to ascend in this manner, nor to ask God for His love, for therein is no presumption soever. When for the space of time aforementioned he has kissed the feet of our Saviour by the confession of his sins, he may well approach Him more nearly and kiss His hands by a confession of the Divine benefits. It is understood that he still sets ever a careful watch over his life, so that he may no lon-

ger have to purge himself daily. And that he may know whether he be purged from his sins, he must think with all diligence if he has attained three things, —namely, fortitude, against all negligence; severity, against concupiscence; and benignity, against malice. When these three things have been attained, the conscience becomes good, pure and upright. That these things may be the better understood, we give here their definitions, according to Saint Bonaventura in his work entitled *Parvum Bonum*.

Fortitude is the strength of the soul, whereby it casts away all negligence, and disposes itself to perform good works, and to perform them with vigilance, confidence and elegance.

Severity is likewise the strength of the soul, which bridles concupiscence, and habilitates the soul and makes it fervent in love of austerity, poverty and lowliness.

Benignity is a sweetness of the soul which casts out from itself all malice,—that is, all wrath, envy and bitterness,—and prepares the soul for goodwill, tolerance and inward joy.

This is the end of our description of the Purgative Way, for every conscience that is made pure is glad and cheerful. When these three things have been attained, our heart will at once be ready for its further ascent, and by these things we may know that we have reached the end of our purification.

PART THE SECOND

CHAPTER XX

How the man that approaches the exercises of the Illuminative Way must be cleansed of his sins through the Purgative Way, that he may be able to bear the rays of the Divine light.

Up to this point we have treated of the Purgative Way only, the which Way cleanses the conscience. And the worth thereof is such that it may more readily be laid up in the heart than described in words or set down in a book. Through this Way the servant of God may rise without intermediary soever to the Illuminative Way, the work whereof is to shed light, even as the Prophet says of the virtuous man: «Blessed is the man whose help is from Thee, for he has prepared his heart to ascend the Valley of Tears wherein God has placed him».

Wherefore we must note that by the sighs and tears of the Purgative Way the soul is cleansed from the rust of its evil works, and soars hence straightway to the illumination of the rays of the Divine light. And this is very agreeable to the soul that receives it, as we may see by our own experience of a mirror. For if it be covered or stained with any rust, or vapour, or other thing that darkens it, it will not reflect or reveal the face of him that looks therein

as it does when it is clear and polished. The soul may well and conveniently be compared to such a mirror; for, were it to see itself clearly, it would likewise see Him Whose image it is; for when that which darkens the rational soul is wiped away, the spiritual sun enlightens it with the rays of its grace and beauty. And furthermore, as the rays of the material sun, when they find a window closed, turn not aside, but remain motionless until it shall be opened, and they may be enabled to enter and illumine the house which before was full of darkness, even so the true Sun of Righteousness, of the celestial city, of whom our sun is an image and a figure, has been motionless at the door of our conscience, awaiting naught else but that in some way or other we may open to Him, and that He may enter and abide peacefully and take His rest in our soul. After this manner the soul is spiritually illumined, and hence, when the rational soul is united with the Divine splendour, it must needs have some conformity and similitude with it. It must first of all be cleansed by the Purgative Way, and separated from all darkness and stain of sin, that it may be like to the spotless mirror, and thus be fit to receive within itself the rays of that endless and everlasting light.

Since we have already set down the exercises which thou must practise after Matins, according to the Purgative Way, for the cleansing aforementioned,

according as we have said with some fulness, we must now set down the exercises of the Illuminative Way, for the which it is meet to take the hour after Compline; for, as Saint Bernard says, the religious must examine his conscience at this hour and give thanks for God's benefits.

CHAPTER XXI

Of the examination which the exercitant should make of his conscience after Compline, that he may pass to the Illuminative Way.

WHEN thou goest out from Compline it behoves thee not to tarry long without thy cell, nor to wander in thought at that hour, either by means of signs, or (even less) by conversation. For, as Saint Bernard says, a monk ought not to speak after Compline, save for some great necessity, until the end of Mass on the day following. Do thou then each day, at the hour aforementioned, go to the place of prayer, sign thyself with the holy Cross, recollect thy spirit, and, either standing or on thy knees, invoke the Holy Ghost, saying this antiphon: *Veni Sancte Spiritus, reple tuorum corda fidelium, et tui amoris in eis ignem accende.* And after it the Psalm: *Deus in adjutorium meum intende.* Say thou the whole of this Psalm, but if one know not the antiphon, or the whole Psalm, let him say this verse three times: *Deus in adjutorium meum intende, Domine ad adjuvandum me festina.*

When thou hast done this, hold chapter very diligently with thyself, examining thyself upon sins of negligence, concupiscence and malice, to the which sins all others may be reduced.

With respect to negligence, thou shalt examine thyself upon nine things, as follows:

If thou hast failed to keep watch over thy heart, on the day that is past, and to examine thyself therein concerning thy thoughts, words and actions.

How thou hast spent thy time.

What intention thou hast had in all thy works, which should ever be directed to one thing, namely, to the glory and honour of God.

If thou hast been negligent in prayer: how thou hast said thine offices for the day, whether devoutly or undevoutly, and if thou hast failed to keep any one of the canonical hours or any one of thine accustomed exercises.

If thou hast been negligent in profiting by thy reading.

How thou hast carried out thy good works. (With these last three things thou shalt most diligently till the soil of thy heart, that it may give good fruit in its season; and thou must know that one of these three, without the others, suffices not.)

How thou hast done thy penance.

How thou hast resisted temptations.

How thou hast progressed in the virtues. (For thou must bewail very diligently the faults thou dost commit and flee from the temptation of the devil, and progress, from virtue to virtue, that so thou mayest come to the Promised Land.)

Note well these nine things aforementioned, which pertain to the sin of negligence.

With respect to concupiscence, thou must consider whether any of it remains in thee, be it of pleasure, curiosity or vanity.

Think thou first upon the concupiscence of pleasure, which thou still hast if thou hast still an appetite for things that are sweet, soft or fleshly. That is to say, if thou seekest out savoury meats, elegant clothing and carnal delights. Concerning the which things it suffices not to reprove a man for consenting to his desire for them, but likewise if he thrust them not from him at their first attack.

Secondly, examine thou thyself concerning the concupiscence of curiosity, which thou still hast if thou desirest to know things that are hidden from thee, to see things that are beautiful, and to desire things that are costly. In all these things lie the vices of avarice and curiosity, the which are greatly to be reproved in a religious.

Thirdly, thou must examine thyself concerning the concupiscence of vanity, which lives within thee still if thou hast appetite for favour, praise and honour. For all these things are vain, and cause a man to love vanity, and therefore are as much to be resisted as desire for women. Concerning all these thy conscience must reprove thee. Note thou them well, for they pertain to the sin of concupiscence.

With respect to malice, examine thyself, and see

if thou hast still wrath, envy or bitterness within thee, the which things make a man evil.

Concerning the first, think thou of the uncharitableness of wrath, which with respect to the mind may be expressed by sign or by word; with respect to the heart by the expression of the face or by speech; or with respect to the desire, by speech or by action.

Secondly, examine thyself upon the uncharitableness of envy, which repines at the prosperity of another, rejoices at his adversity, and hardens itself at his necessity.

Thirdly, examine thyself upon the uncharitableness of bitterness, whence arise evil suspicions, blasphemous thoughts, and malicious detractions. All malice of this kind is very hateful. Wherefore, when thou hast thus examined thy conscience concerning its guilt, grieve thou before God, and wash away thy sins, and purify thy conscience with tears. Resolve thou to confess such faults as thou findest, and note well this manner aforementioned of examination, whereon we have enlarged, that thou mayest know it and practise it in confession. It behoves thee not always after Compline to make so long an examination, the more so if thou dost study and art vigilant to keep watch upon thyself daily. But each day thou mayest briefly examine thyself concerning that which thou hast done, asking pardon of God for thy sins, making a general confession, and saying the Psalm *De Pro-*

fundis for thy shortcomings. From this point thou wilt pass with the understanding to consider and confess with great love and much diligence the benefits of God. And in this recognition of thy faults thou wilt be illumined by rays of Divine light, in the which illumination it behoves thee to give thanks for these and other favours with kindling affection. And these other benefits, that thou mayest the better and more fully consider them, we shall set down by days of the week, according to the manner following.

CHAPTER XXII

Of the Illuminative Way, according to Saint Dionysius.

WHEN the conscience has been purged and cleansed, like to a mirror, according as we said above, it is the better prepared and made ready for the love of God, and the readier to pass to the Illuminative Way, wherein a man begins at last to see and know his Beloved, which he could not aforetime by reason of the rust of his sins. And now the soul enquires of itself, saying: « Who is my Beloved? » and itself gives the answer: « It is He Who has given me so many benefits and favours, to Whom, were it possible, I should never cease to give thanks and praises ».

This Illuminative Way was trodden by the prophet David, when he said in the Psalm: «O my soul, bless thou the Lord, and all things that are within me bless His holy name». Yet we must understand that it is not chiefly for His benefits that we must love God, but for His measureless goodness and for Himself. For even as a thing is not seen by light itself, but only through the medium of light, and through light it is seen more clearly, even so this Way is called Illuminative, because it illumines, kindles and incites every man to love God. Wherefore says Saint Bernard: « So many are the favours which God has given me, that if I were to consider them

all, and if it were a peasant that had given them to me, I should be obliged to love him. What therefore shall I give to the greatest of all lovers for the benefits which He has bestowed on me? Of a truth I shall give Him thanks, and remember His favours whensoever I may».

That thou mayest not wander along many and divers paths, but mayest the more lovingly dwell on the favours of God, we set down here these same favours, concerning which we make ordinance in the Directory, for the hours of Prime and Terce.

CHAPTER XXIII

Of the manner wherein the exercitant must proceed for the illumination of his soul, confessing the benefits of God, and giving thanks for them according to the days of the week in the Way that is called Illuminative.

On Monday, after Compline, thou shalt consider very diligently the benefit of creation, saying, after each of the articles which are to follow, these words:

«I give Thee thanks, O Lord my God Most High,

«That Thou didst predestine me from all eternity and hast loved me with a perpetual love.

«That at the time when it pleased Thee, Thou didst create me as one of the noblest of Thy creatures, —namely, man — for Thou madest me not of stone or of any such thing.

«That, with respect to my body, Thou gavest me integrity in my members, and good health, making me a man and freeing me from many miseries that I might be able to serve Thee.

«That, with respect to my soul, Thou hast favoured me greatly by creating it in Thy image and likeness, making it immortal and able to receive Thee Thyself, adorning it with many faculties and great power.

« For the guardianship of the angels: for since I was conceived in the womb of my mother Thou hast appointed an angel to guard me, and hast given me other benefits innumerable.

« That thou gavest me Christian parents, of whom I was born a Christian, and neither a Moor, a Jew, or an infidel, and likewise that I was born in the era of the Christian faith ».

When thou hast ended these exercises, wherein after this manner thou hast confessed the benefits of God and given thanks for them, according to this way which is called Illuminative, rise thou from this exercise with great reverence, adoring and glorifying God, and saying: *Deus propitius esto mihi peccatori;* and the Psalm *Benedicite omnia opera Domini Domino,* or *Te Deum laudamus* or *Lauda anima mea Dominum.* And, having finished the psalm, say thou: *Sit nomen Domini benedictum, ex hoc nunc et usque in saeculum. Domine exaudi orationem meam, et clamor meus ad te veniat.*

OREMUS

Gratias ago tibi, Domine sancte, Pater omnipotens, aeterne Deus, qui me dignatus es in hac die per tuam sanctam misericordiam custodire: concede mihi hanc noctem mundo corde et corpore sic transire: quatenus mane gratum tibi servitium exolvere possim. Per Christum Dominum nostrum.

After this, with great caution, and keeping guard

over thy soul, thou shalt lie down to sleep, never ceasing to utter words of joy in thy heart, and saying as follows:

«O most ardent Lover, Thou that art my love, my glory, my Father, and my hope, when shall I love Thee with the true love of a son? When with my whole heart shall I embrace Thee?»

And if thou dost habituate thyself to say these words, repeating them many times with deepest love, from the bottom of thy heart, thou shalt learn by experience how great shall be thy profit and to what lofty heights thou shalt soar. Lie down, then, to rest, making the sign of the holy Cross and rejoicing in the words aforesaid or in many others like to them.

And mark well that this exercise of the Illuminative Way consists not in thy making haste to complete it. For thou shouldst tarry lovingly upon each article thereof, enkindling thy soul in love, until, if this may be, it becomes lost in wonder. And if the time allotted for prayer permit thee to consider but one single article, thou shalt take no thought for the rest, but go through them with thy memory alone, and so bring thy exercise to an end. And this same rule thou shouldst observe in all the other exercises, for it behoves thee never to allow thy mind to wander from an exercise, nor to hasten thee to complete it. Rather, if in the beginning thereof the Lord should visit thee with the

grace of devotion and compunction, thou shalt retire within thyself, and remain in tranquillity, keeping this grace within thee, and allowing thy heart to be enlarged with its desires. And spend thou all thy time of prayer in this manner. Allow not thyself to wander, whether from a desire to complete the exercise or for any other reason, for, if this thou dost, the grace of devotion or compunction will pass from thee and thou shalt not be able to recover it. And if thou find thyself enkindled in love and devotion, make not at the end of the exercise thy wonted prostration, neither take thou at that time the discipline.

On Tuesday, after Compline, consider the benefit of thy reconciliation.

«I thank Thee, O Lord my God Most High, that Thou didst deign to reconcile me to Thyself in Thy most beloved Son, sparing Him not but giving Him up for my sake, as my Ransom, as my Example and as my Companion. I thank Thee that Thou didst give me the Holy Spirit as a pledge of my adoption, a privilege of Thy love and a token of my soul's betrothal to Thee; that Thou gavest me a share in His gifts and fruits and holy inspirations.

«That thou hast bestowed upon me the Holy Sacraments, giving me in the first place Holy Church for a refuge, where I might be saved from the deluge (namely, from sin), even as Noah was saved in the Ark.

« For baptismal grace, through the which Thou didst pardon my original sin, and didst restore to me innocence and clothe me with Thy righteousness.

« For the sacrament of confirmation, which to many has been denied, but through the which Thou gavest to me many gifts and didst free me from many evils.

« That, as a pledge of the grace which Thou hast given me, and wherein Thou hast received me, Thou didst call me by Thy name, — that is, by the name of Christian; and this name Thou hast left me as a memory of Thyself, making me Thy son, and heir to the kingdom of Heaven ».

Having ended this exercise, thou shalt do as has been already said at the end of the devotion for Monday.

On Wednesday, after Compline, consider the grace of thy vocation.

« I give thee thanks, O Lord my God Most High,

« That when, after receiving so many benefits from Thee, I forsook Thee, and turned to the creatures, committing divers sins, Thou didst bear with me so patiently, and didst wait for me so long time, desiring not to condemn me nor allowing me to die in that state.

« That when so many times and in so many ways I have strayed, Thou hast recalled me to Thyself, now through inward inspiration, now through the counsel

of others, now through the exhortations of Holy Scripture, now through the revelation to me of Thy benefits and of Thy punishments, and in many ways beside.

« That Thou didst deign to break the hardness of this heart that is so hard, giving virtue to Thy voice, and giving to me a good will, which of all Thy gifts is the most precious; and that Thou didst turn aside all hindrances to my conversion.

« That whensoever I desired to approach Thee, Thou didst receive me as the father received the prodigal son, with great joy, with Thine embrace and with Thy kiss, returning to me the robe and the ring which were mine of old.

« That Thou hast not only drawn me from the world, but hast led me to a house of religion that is reformed and holy and hast kept me from one that is not reformed, giving me time for repentance, which is very precious, and grace wherewith to gain merit, washing me from my sins that are past, by my holy profession, as in a second baptism ».

When thou hast ended this exercise, thou shalt do that which is appointed for Monday.

On Thursday, after Compline, consider the benefit of justification.

« I give Thee thanks, O Lord my God Most High,

« That it has pleased Thee to change my will in such manner that the works of penitence which afore-

time were bitter to me should become sweet, and that which aforetime was sweet should become bitter.

«I thank Thee likewise for giving me continence against evil and sin, which is a gift most noble.

«For giving me constancy and perseverance, without which no man living can be justified, since so many have begun and have not persevered.

«For giving me grace not to faint in the things that I have begun, and hope of attaining pardon, grace and glory, certifying me of these favours by many kinds of inward consolation, and giving me grace to go forward, abhorring my evil deeds which are past and desiring the good things which are to come.

«For preparing me a table where I may find refreshment and sustenance, lest I should faint on the way of progress; for giving me the Sacrament of Thy most precious Body and Blood as a viaticum for this pilgrimage, as a sacrament of communion and a sacrifice of redemption.

«For giving me all things necessary that I may the more perfectly be justified and cleansed, — to wit, the Holy Scriptures and other books, as a mirror wherein I may contemplate my failings and enkindle my desires.

«For giving me the adornments and exercises of virtue wherewith I may adorn the shamefulness of my sins and for giving me the saints as an example, that I may be awakened and instructed by them, and

neither fail nor grow cold in the works of righteousness. »

When thou hast ended this exercise, thou shalt do as was appointed for Monday.

On Friday, after Compline, consider the benefit of the singular gifts of God.

« I give Thee thanks, O Lord my God Most High,

« That of gifts of nature, Thou hast given me a capacity for understanding and a tenacious memory; of gifts of fortune, strength and beauty; of gifts of grace, purity of belief and ardour in following Thee.

« That Thou hast given me many other good things likewise. For when I have been lost, Thou hast led me back to my path; when I have been ignorant, Thou hast taught me; when I have fallen, Thou hast set me upon my feet.

« That Thou hast given me the singular grace of meditation, and of exercising myself in things spiritual, instructing my understanding, awakening my affections and enabling me to carry out that which I purpose.

« That not only hast Thou instructed my understanding by the way of meditation, but, which is more, hast kindled my affections with the joy of devotion, and hast inflamed them by filling them with inward consolation and giving me the pledge of eternal life.

« That, lest I should lose the graces aforementioned,

Thou hast kept me wondrously from sinning, removing from me the occasions and causes of sin, giving me strength to resist temptation, or cleansing my affections that temptation might not come to me.

«That when Thou hast permitted me to fall into temptations, Thou hast raised me from them a stronger man, giving me strength to resist more resolutely, and upholding me with Thy hand that I might not be utterly broken.»

When thou hast ended this exercise, thou shalt do in every respect according to the directions for Monday.

On Saturday, after Compline, consider the benefit of the Divine Governance.

«I give Thee thanks, O Lord my God Most High,

«That Thou hast preserved and kept me in being, increasing Thy goodness to me daily and granting me health and happiness, though I of myself am nothing.

«That from my youth until this present day Thou hast kept me free from danger, sickness, enemies and many evils beside.

«That Thou hast given me maintenance sufficient to sustain me, and clothing sufficient for my use day by day.

«That Thou hast ministered to me in all other things that are needful, giving me a house to dwell in and a bed to rest in; and not only things need-

ful, but many others which are for my profit and my happiness.

« That Thou hast not only governed me, but likewise, for love of me, hast kept and preserved all creatures else in their being, hast ordered the seasons, and caused each of them to produce divers fruits that I might grow weary of none of them.

« That Thou hast governed me by leading me not only into prosperity, but into adversity. For therein hast Thou given me many good things, purging me from my sins and increasing my deservings. And furthermore, Thou hast governed me with love as watchful as though I alone had been Thy care, and Thou art ever beside me, watching me in all that I do. »

When thou hast ended this exercise, thou shalt do in every respect according to the directions for Monday.

On Sunday, after Compline, consider the benefit of glorification.

« I give Thee thanks, O Lord my God Most High,

« That Thou hast promised me the joys of Paradise, and wilt give me things which are far above my comprehension, — to wit, the fruition of Divinity and the vision of my Redeemer and of His glorious Mother. Ah, Lord, how great will be my joy when I see the King of Heaven in His beauty, and my Lady the Virgin Mary, made like to Him and glorified!

« That around me I shall have the company of the Saints, which by reason of its quality is marvellously merry and joyful; for the Saints are very beauteous and very noble, and their love is beyond compare, and the number of them likewise is very great.

« That inwardly my soul shall be glorified and my body likewise, by reason of the fourfold gifts wherewith it shall be adorned; with immortality it shall be clothed, and it shall be incomparably more resplendent than the sun.

« That with respect to outward things Thou hast given me a place that is so pleasant and so full of delight, containing so much whereof I may have fruition: to wit, sweetness and perfume; songs, melodies and harmonies of many kinds; and a place that is most lofty and spacious, and very luminous and bright.

« That Thou wilt give me many joys beside, even as Thou hast promised; not only shall I joy in that which is above me, but also in that which is beneath me, for I shall see how many and how terrible are the enemies whom by Thy grace and power I have overcome, and the sins which I committed but by Thy mercy was enabled to conquer, and the grievous torments which thus I have escaped.

« That Thou wilt give me other blessings still,—so many that I cannot reckon them, so great that I cannot conceive them, and so precious that I cannot set a price on them. All evil things will be with-

drawn from me and all my desires fulfilled. That which I desire not I shall have not, and that which I desire I shall have.»

When thou hast ended this exercise, thou shalt do in every respect according to the directions for Monday.

Note thou here that each of thy meditations upon these benefits must be made with great love, even as I have said. And to excite the affections during any of these meditations thou mayest use certain ejaculations, lifting up thy soul and saying:

O Sovereign Goodness,
O most lofty Eternity,
O incomprehensible Majesty,
O most ardent Lover,
O sweetest Guest,
O most holy Sweetness,
O most illustrious King,
O most prudent Master,
O most sufficient Restorer,
O most bounteous Pardoner,
O most diligent Preserver,

When, O Lord, shall I be able to give Thee worthy thanks for so many benefits, gifts and mercies?

And not only in this exercise of the Illuminative Way shalt thou use these ejaculations, but in the other exercises likewise. Further, in rendering thanks for these benefits, thou must use certain authors of

Holy Scripture, lifting up thy soul and saying: « Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honour and power and might be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen. » Or saying: *Regi autem saeculorum immortali, invisibili*, etc. Or *Benedic anima mea Domino*, etc.

Furthermore, thou must use this exercise of thanksgiving in all the other exercises; for prayer, to be perfect, must ever have three parts, namely: acknowledgment of sin, imploring of mercy and giving of thanks.

With any one of these parts may the exercitant begin his prayer, for it is not always needful for a man to begin with the acknowledgment of his wretchedness.

Begin then according to the state of thy soul, in the manner following:

Beginners may first make acknowledgment of their wretchedness. Progressives may first offer thanks. While proficients, who have exercised themselves for a long time, may begin with the sighs and longings that belong to Union,—that is, of love. And from time to time they may descend to make acknowledgment of their wretchedness and to consider such matters as awaken fear.

CHAPTER XXIV

How the Illuminative Way receives rays of brightness from many sources, and principally from the prayer *Pater Noster*, which was made by our Redeemer, and whereon the exercitant must meditate with very great diligence, affection and devotion, that there may be kindled within him Divine love.

As the stars receive brightness from the sun, even so does this Illuminative Way receive rays of brightness from the true Sun of Righteousness, Christ our Redeemer: that is to say, from His most holy life, example and doctrine. For the life of the Saviour is naught else than a resplendent brightness to enlighten our souls. Wherefore, if thou wilt be enlightened, it behoves thee to consider frequently, and to get by heart, the life, example and doctrine of the Lord. Furthermore, this Way receives light from the lives of the holy Fathers, which are given us for examples that we may prudently imitate them. Likewise it receives light from studied meditation upon the creation of all things that God has made, and from the reading of Holy Scripture, and from devout hearing of the Word of God, and from continual prayer; especially the use of the prayer above mentioned, *Pater Noster*. And, to the end that thy understanding may be the more enlightened and enkindled in Divine love, we will expound here in the spiritual

and mystical sense the said prayer of *Pater Noster*, according to the seven petitions which are contained therein.

First we shall say *Pater Noster*,—that is: O most loving Father, Thou dost engender spiritual children, by scattering in their hearts the seed of Thy most tender love which gives them life. Then if I am indeed Thy son, O Lord, show me how I may love Thee with true love, and embrace Thee with all the power of my heart. Verily, O Lord, Thou art our Father, and Thou dost scatter Thy goodness most bounteously in all that love Thee. And if I truly loved Thee, Thou wouldst distil within me somewhat of the bounteousness of the dew of Thy grace and charity. Give me grace, O Lord, that I may love Thee with all ardour, for if I loved Thee with all my will, the bounty of Thy goodness would appear in me also.

After such manner as this we may understand that which follows of the *Pater Noster*, giving it a spiritual and mystical meaning, in the which way, by making a meditation in the manner aforementioned, the affection of our love will gradually be enkindled. For as flax which is set in the rays of the sun first dies and afterwards catches fire, even so, and much more, is the heart set on fire by thinking upon the said meditation, and it soars aloft in God.

After the same manner may the devout soul consider the words *Qui es in coelis*,—that is, which art

in Heaven. Ah, wretched soul of mine, shalt thou indeed be made pure and clean as Heaven itself, and be adorned with divers virtues even as the heavens are adorned with divers stars? Then, good Father, I shall know that it pleases Thee to dwell in me, when I shall embrace Thee with enkindled love, and be cleansed by the flame of thy love from the filth of my sins. Then shall I know Thee, without doubtfulness soever, when Thou shalt cover me with the shadow of Thy grace, and it shall please Thee to come and abide in the dwelling of my soul, that shall be cleansed from the foulness of sin.

FIRST PETITION

Sanctificetur nomen tuum: Hallowed be Thy Name.

O most loving Father: Then shall Thy Name be sanctified in us,—that is to say, the knowledge of Thee shall be perfected in us without stain of earth, —that is, without carnal desire,—and above all things that are in the world we shall love Thee and Thee only. When I, Lord, shall attain to this, there shall be no place in me for earthliness, or carnal desire, since Thou, most gracious Father, shalt dwell in me by Thy grace and charity.

SECOND PETITION

Adveniat regnum tuum: Thy Kingdom come.

Woe is me, that am a sinner, for oft-times vainglory, gluttony and lust desire to enter and to reign

in me, but I, Lord, would have none reign in me save Thou only, O good Father, that art in Heaven. When I shall love Thee with all fervour, then shalt Thou reign in me truly. And when, O Lord, shall I be able to hold and embrace Thee with the enkindled love of charity that Thou mayest begin to reign alone in the kingdom of my will, that is full of darkness and evil?

THIRD PETITION

Fiat voluntas tua sicut in coelo et in terra: Thy will be done on earth as it is done in Heaven.

In me, O Lord, wretched worm of the earth, shall Thy will be done when I am consenting thereto in so far as is suffered by human frailty, and as those blessed spirits are consenting thereto who in Heaven see Thy majesty face to face. But, O my most loving God, what will make me to consent to Thy will but the fervour of love which soars on high uniting wills that now are contrary, conforming Thy lover with Thyself, and transforming him in most marvellous wise from glory into glory? Then when shall I love Thee with my whole heart, O good Jesus, my Lord and Redeemer? When shall I be consenting to Thy will alone, and when shall I be united with Thee by the bond of love?

FOURTH PETITION

Panem nostrum quotidianum da nobis hodie: Give us this day our daily bread.

O Bread of angels, when shall I be filled with Thee, that art sweetest food? By Thee, living Bread that camest down from Heaven, live the angels and the blessed spirits in Thy kingdom, united to Thee, good Father and Redeemer, with enkindled desires of love. Give me then ever of this Bread, good Father everlasting, that I may be sustained in this mortal life by this food whereon the angels feed in heavenly glory, and that I may taste of the food of the holy table of Thy happiness. Give me ever of this bread, O good and everlasting Father. For my heart is full of unrest until in some manner it be filled with Thee, living Bread that camest down from Heaven. The bread of Thy love is daily bread; wherefore the more it is loved, the more is it longed for.

FIFTH PETITION

Et dimitte nobis debita nostra, sicut et nos dimittimus debitoribus nostris: And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.

O my good Creditor, sweet Jesus, my Redeemer, when and in what manner shall I be able to know that my sins are forgiven me? Lord, if I loved Thee truly, I should know inwardly, and without any doubtfulness, that Thou hadst pardoned the sins of my evil nature. For as sin made me Thy enemy by withdrawing me from Thee, even so, if love united me to Thee, it would constrain Thee to pardon all my sins and wrong-doing, and would make me

pleasant and gracious in Thine eyes. When, then, my Lord and my Saviour, shall I be united with Thee by love, that I may know by experience that Thou hast pardoned my sins and art become merciful and gracious to me?

SIXTH PETITION

Et ne nos inducas in tentationem: And lead us not into temptation.

This I ask, my Father and Creator, trusting in Thy goodness, and having hope of being united to Thee inseparably with the bond of love. I know, Lord, that, if the fragrance of Thy love makes me to run after Thee, I shall be bound to Thee with a bond so strong that I shall hold of no account all contrarieties and shall come so near to Thee that I shall never be sundered from Thee. Who will aid me, Lord, to find Thee, to embrace Thee, and Thee alone, and never more to be parted from Thee? For Thou alone art the good and loving Guest of my soul, and Thou alone canst make me safe and keep me from all contrarieties.

SEVENTH PETITION

Sed libera nos a malo: But deliver us from evil.

From all evil, Lord, deliver us, not only from that of the pain of hell, but likewise from the pain of the fire of purgatory. And this I ask not, good and loving Father, that I may escape the cleansing pains,

but because, for so long as I am kept in purgatory, my desire cannot be fulfilled,—namely, to gaze upon Thy Majesty, so full of grace, whereon the angels and the holy souls desire to gaze always. And if I loved Thee truly, Thy love would utterly destroy the punishment of hell which I have merited by my sins. If I loved Thee truly, the kindling fire of Thy love would consume all the rust of my sins, that my spirit, cleansed by the flames of ardent desire, might fly to Thee, without hindrance soever, on the last day of my perfecting.

When shall I love Thee, Lord, with so great ardour of love that it may suffice to free me from purgatorial torments and separation from Thy presence? This, Lord, wilt Thou accomplish by Thy goodness and mercy alone, Who livest and reignest for ever and ever. Amen. Thou, Lord, Who art without change and variableness, canst give to me, Thy servant, all the holy virtues, for Thou satisfiest the angels and the holy souls. Thou, Lord, art Wisdom uncreated: with brightest rays of Thy splendour, Thou illuminest the angels and all the citizens of Heaven, for Thy virtue gives life to all things created. Increase, Lord, the number of Thy lovers, and withdraw them from love of earthly things; make them to return to the desire and knowledge of Thee, and take from them all dissipation of their affections, bringing them to Thy kingdom and to heavenly truth. For Thou, O Lord, our Redeemer, bringest

the children of Israel, who have wandered long in search of temporal possessions, into a dwelling of everlasting light.

Wherefore, brother, pray thou after this manner, saying: « O good Jesus, sweet and lovely, merciful and tender, have mercy upon all sinners whom Thou didst redeem with Thy precious Blood and with such bitter pains, Who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. Amen. »

CHAPTER XXV

Which admonishes the exercitant how great is the sin of one that out of negligence desists from performing the exercises above-mentioned.

The holy abbot Ephraim, in his treatise upon Contemplation, straitly reproves such as are set apart for the service of God, and called to a life of religion, whom God has given such peace and leisure for spiritual exercises that they may be united with Him through prayer and contemplation, when, because of unruly living, sloth, negligence and heedlessness, they take no care to exercise themselves duly. Against such he alleges the arguments which follow:

First, he reminds them that they are disobedient to the comandments of God, Who says: *Vacate, et videte quoniam ego sum Deus.* That is to say: Be still, and know that I am God. By this he would have us understand that above all things else we must meditate, contemplate and comprehend this fact,—namely, that He is our God and Lord, and is to be loved and served with all our powers. Wherefore, if a religious has no care for these exercises, it is clear that he is disobedient, because he keeps not the said commandment.

Secondly, the negligent religious has little love for God,—less, indeed, than for any other person, since he conforms not to that which belongs to his ha-

bit and religious order. For he is called by a name which marks him as the especial servant and friend of God; he has to read in the holy Scriptures, which are the image of God; and he says the Divine office, which is naught else than to talk with God. If the religious is insensible to this, it is a clear sign that he has little love for God, neither has he part nor lot with Him: which to say that it were better for him had he never entered the life of religion.

Thirdly, the less such persons serve God, the less certain are they of His grace, and, since they seek Him not, He gives them no sign of His love. Wherefore, to their great shame, He bestows upon them fewer such signs than upon seculars and upon persons that are simple and unlettered; for such as these serve, love and seek Him more loyally and with greater diligence.

Fourthly, religious that are negligent show clearly concerning themselves that there is little in them that is good; that, having been set in a high estate, they are colder and more remiss, bear less fruit and have less devotion than others that are set in an estate that is less lofty; wherefore they merit being despised and cast off by God, and made a scorn and reproach to others that have been set below them.

Fifthly, our Lord God has given them greater opportunities of doing good than to any others, and has freed them and withdrawn them from men's labours that they may occupy themselves with His business. And, since they spend in delicate, negligent

and idle living the time which is given them for the service of God, it is no marvel if He gives them not the experience of His presence, nor permits them to taste His love.

Sixthly, God has set them as mediators between Himself and His people, giving them, as it were, to eat of the sins of the people, and this, in fact, such negligent religious do; notwithstanding which, they have no care to approach God or to seek to be familiar with Him by means of prayers and contemplation and the practice of good works. Whence it follows that, by despising Him thus, they provoke Him against themselves, and make themselves unworthy to be mediators with His people and to receive the alms which for this reason come to them.

Seventhly, the exercises of prayer and contemplation are very necessary to religious, making them stronger in temptation, withdrawing them from sin, and making them more virtuous, exemplary and fervent in correcting others for their sins. For all these reasons the said holy father [Ephraim] admonishes every religious who is not otherwise occupied by reason of his obedience that he devote himself to prayer and contemplation and put aside all things else.

And now, to avoid prolixity, we refrain from quoting many other authorities who might be appealed to upon this matter, and, saying no more of the Illuminative Way, we shall pass on to the Unitive Way, which is the way of Perfection.

PART THE THIRD

CHAPTER XXVI

Of the Unitive and Perfective Way, showing what it is, and the qualifications necessary in the exercitant who would attain thereto.

SINCE we have spoken of the Illuminative Way, which gives light to the understanding, and how by means thereof the exercitant may come by meditation to his desired goal, which is the union of the soul with God, it behoves us now to speak of the Unitive and Perfective Way, the which unites the soul with God and makes it perfect. And this, according to the saints, is the goal of true wisdom.

First of all, the Unitive Way, according to Saint Dionysius, is that whereby the exercitant who is already purged and enlightened is united in love to his Creator, and rejoices in His perfections, desiring to please Him alone, both readily and joyously. Now he magnifies Him, now he praises Him, now he marvels at His greatness, and languishes in love for Him, so that he can say, with the author of the Song of Songs: *Anima mea liquefacta est, ut dilectus locutus est mihi.* Which is to say: My soul melted when my Beloved spoke to me. And likewise the words which say: *Fulcite me floribus, stipate me malis, nunciate dilecto quia amore langueo.* Which signifies: Adorn me with flowers, surround me with apples, and say to my Beloved that I languish with love for Him.

And this love wherewith thou seekest thy Beloved must be most pure, — that is to say, it should be chiefly given on account of God's goodness. For with the Psalmist we must say: *Quid enim mihi est in coelo: et a te quid volui super terram?* Which signifies: I love Thee purely, O Lord, -- not for the gifts of Heaven, neither for the gifts of earth, but for Thy sovereign goodness and for Thyself; and I love Thee above all things that are in Heaven and in earth.

Wherefore thou must know that in the Unitive Way the exercitant lifts up his heart with great love to God, withdrawing himself from all vanities and all things created, taking his affection from creature love and turning it to love of the Creator, having ever before him the words which are written in Ecclesiastes: *Vidi cuncta quae erant sub sole: et ecce universa vanitas.* Which is to say: I saw all things that were beneath the sun, and I saw that all were vanity. Wherefore, brother, do thou as the bird that soars on high, which if it meets with flies on its way, heeds them not; and these flies are vain cogitations whereof thou shouldst take no account, but soar ever higher with the wings of love, saying: « My path is towards the sun, » — that is to say, towards Christ our Redeemer, Who is the true Sun of Righteousness, Who alone is holy, alone the Lord, alone the Most High, — « wherefore I will not allow my heart to be occupied with the vanities which are of earth ».

Further thou must note that this Way is reached by inward recollection of thyself from outward things to things which are within; from things which are low to things which are high; from things of time to things of eternity.

Wherefore it is needful for the attainment thereof that the exercitant be rooted in virtues by habit as well as by grace, that he have no delight in vain-glorious appetite, in the lust of riches, nor in the lust of the eyes, nor in gluttony.

Secondly, he needs the silence that is within, so that he be tranquil amidst the noise of all outward things, giving no heed to that which he hears or sees, nor taking any more account thereof than if it had come to him in a dream.

Thirdly, he needs to be in loving union with God, so that with great reverence he may embrace all the judgments of God, all His deeds and all His instructions.

Fourthly, he must seek for nothing, but must know that God His Well-Beloved is wholly sufficient for him; exalting God and giving Him supremacy in his heart, loving Him above all that can be seen, heard, thought or even imagined; for He is altogether to be loved, altogether to be desired, and altogether faithful.

And thou must know that He Whom thou desirest perfectly to love can neither be seen nor heard, neither can He be reached by the senses of taste,

smell, touch or feeling; yet none the less He is altogether to be desired. Further, thou must consider that He Whom thou seekest in love has no limit, no shape, no measure, no circumscription; neither can He ever change, nor be imagined in any way soever; yet is He altogether to be desired. Consider furthermore that He Whom thou lovest cannot be demonstrated, defined, comprehended, examined or understood; yet is He altogether to be desired.

Fifthly, call thou oft-times the perfections of God to memory, and rejoice thou inwardly because of them with exceeding joy. And although His perfections are infinite, yet are there three which are most commonly remembered, and concerning which thou shouldst awaken thy affection in this manner, saying as follows:

«O my Lord and my Beloved, I rejoice because Thou art most mighty, not for the good that comes to me therefrom, as though I sought my own advantage, but because Thou hast this perfection, and fearest none, neither hast need of any. For none can overcome Thee, none can resist Thee, whether the devil or any other adversary. And herein, first of all, do I greatly rejoice.

«Secondly, I rejoice, O Lord, because Thou art most wise, knowing in Thyself, with a knowledge most clear and transparent, all things, both good and evil, past, present and to come; for Thou seest things that change without Thyself changing, and things that

are uncertain without uncertainty; and all this is of Thy sovereign perfection. And because naught is hidden from Thee, therefore can naught deceive Thee.

« Thirdly, I rejoice greatly because Thou art supremely good, — that is to say, of sovereign perfection. For Thou art ever good and changest not, — better art Thou than aught else, and nobler than aught that can be imagined. »

Finally, it is of great advantage to a beginner to have some short words and exclamations, whereby he may express his loving desires by speaking to the Lord in prayer, according as we said at the end of the section on the Illuminative Way. Concerning this we will speak further in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XXVII

Of things whereon the exercitant may meditate throughout the week, at the beginning of his prayer, after Matins, according as pertains to this Way, which is called Unitive and Perfective, to the end that he may mount the six steps which lead to the union of the soul with God.

WHEN thou hast come, my brother, to the place of thy prayer, signed thyself with the holy Cross, and recollected thy spirit, take thou upon thyself the person of a son, or of a spouse, with affection of love; make thou thy meditation concerning the perfections and praises of God; and learn thou to taste therein how gracious the Lord is, after the manner which follows.

On Monday, consider how He is the beginning and the end of all things. On Tuesday, how He is the beauty of the universe. On Wednesday, how He is the glory of the world. On Thursday, how He is wholly love. On Friday, how He is the Ruler of all things. On Saturday, how He is our most tranquil Governor. On Sunday, how He is the all-sufficient Giver.

On Monday, consider thou with loving thoughts how God is the Maker of all being, — that is, the beginning and end of all things — upon Whose will depend all creatures both mortal and immortal.

Consider thou that He gives all things their being;

that it is He Who makes and restores, and both creates and governs that which He has created; in Whom to will and to do are both as one.

Consider how thou canst not imagine Him as not existing; for, if He existed not, naught else could exist; nor has He His being of any other, but all things that are have their being of Him.

Consider likewise how there is naught that so communicates its goodness as He, and that the more widely spread His goodness, the more perfect it is. How none is so quickly appeased as He, nor so greatly to be desired, enjoyed and loved. How He is the one universal cause of all things created; for even heathen philosophers knew Him as the first cause by the exercise of their reason.

Consider that it is from Him and in Him and through Him that all things have their being; that He fills Heaven and earth; that in His virtue all creatures are sustained; that every place is in Him; that all things have been made by Him; and that without Him has naught been made at all. How He cannot be felt or seen but yet sees all, feels all and knows all; and that He never dies.

When in the depths of thy heart thou hast considered these things with great joy concerning the sovereign goodness of thy Beloved, then do thou make thy prayer, lifting up thy heart to God, speaking to Him lovingly within thyself with enkindled desires and sighs, and saying:

« O Lord, Thou art my love, my honour, my hope, my refuge, my life and my end. My love, my happiness, my guardian, my joy, the director of my steps, the teacher of my heart and my exceeding joy. I seek not, Lord, neither do I desire that aught shall be spoken to me save of Thyself, nor that any other should be offered me; for Thou art wholly sufficient for me. Thou, O Lord, art my Father, my Brother, my Creator, my Governor and my Guardian. Thou art wholly to be loved and desired: Thou art wholly faithful.

« Who is there so liberal that he will give his very self? Who so loving that he will die for the vilest of sinners? Who so humble that he will so greatly humiliate his majesty?

« O Lord, Who despisest none, abhorrest none, and forsakest none that seeks Thee, but rather dost go before them and come out to receive them when they seek Thee, Thy delights are indeed to dwell with the sons of men.

« What is it, O Lord, that Thou hast found in me, save the filth of sin? Yet Thou dost promise to be with me even unto the end of the world. Was it not enough, O Lord, that Thou didst die for me? That Thou hast given me so many sacraments and angels to guard me? Can it be that despite my ingratitude for all these things Thou desirest to be ever with me? O most loving Father, so good art Thou that Thou deniest Thyself to none. Let us therefore make an exchange: as Thou thinkest upon

me, so will I ever think upon Thee. Do with me even as Thou wilt and as Thou knowest to be best, for I am Thine and I desire to belong to none other. Grant me grace, O Lord, that I may think upon Thee alone, that I may love Thee alone and that I may ever be aflame with love for Thee. May I covet naught but Thyself, offer myself to Thee wholly, and, when Thou hast accepted me, never withdraw from Thee more.

« O fire, that enkindlest me! O love, that inflamest me! O light, that enlightenest me! O my rest, my refreshment, my hope, my treasure, my life! O love, that ever burnest and art never quenched!

« O Jesus Christ, my King and my Lord, enkindle me with the fire of Thy love, of desire for Thee, of charity which comes from Thee, of joy in Thee, of peace in Thee, of Thy mercy and of Thy meekness, that, being filled with the sweetness of Thy love and made mighty with the flame of Thy charity, I may love Thee, most sweet and gracious Lord, with all my heart, with all my soul and with all my strength, with all my intention, with great contrition and compunction, with all reverence, trembling and fear, having Thee ever in my heart, before my eyes, and everywhere; in such manner that no other and no private love may find entrance into my soul, but rather that I may be wholly transformed in Thy love, and merit by this transformation to become one spirit with Thee. »

After thou hast exercised thyself for some time in this manner by the grace of God, and hast attained to the love of Him, and hast mounted the six steps which we shall describe herewith; then, without any preceding meditation or labour of the understanding, thou mayest lift up thy heart to God an hundred times in the day with great love.

And if anyone by reason of his simplicity cannot exercise himself in this way aforesaid, let him ground himself at the least in the virtue of faith, have sorrow for his sins wherewith he has offended God, and if he cannot meditate upon the Divine Scripture let him strive to love God in his prayers with all his heart, repeating often such words as these with sighs for Divine love: « O Lord, when shall I be able to embrace Thee, with sure and undivided love? O most ardent Lover, when shall I love Thee with the love of a son? »

And if he do this, howsoever simple he be, through sorrow for his sins; and kiss, as it were, the feet of the Beloved; and then be mindful of His benefits, kissing, as it were, the Beloved's hands, he shall rise to kiss Him upon the mouth, that is, in the desire of the Divine love; even as Solomon says in the Song of Songs in the person of the Spouse that is joined with her Redeemer; *Osculetur me osculo oris sui.* Which is to say: « Let him kiss me with the kiss of his mouth. » And such a man shall not be held proud or presumptuous in desiring this

kiss of the mouth, since he will have accustomed and exercised himself in the kiss of the feet, which is sorrow for sin, and in the kiss of the hands, through mindfulness of the benefits of God, even as we said above in the nineteenth chapter, speaking of the Purgative Way. Let this, then, be the exercise for Monday. And thou shouldst note that this exercise consists wholly in sighs and longing desires for thy Beloved.

On Tuesday, when thou hast come to the place of prayer, and hast signed thyself with the holy Cross, take thou upon thyself the person of a son, and, with loving heart, make thy meditation after this manner:

Consider first how this thy Beloved is the beauty of the universe, and has made all creatures beautiful. How both sun and moon do marvel at His beauty, and the angels desire to look upon Him.

Consider how from this thy Beloved all things created have their beauty, - the stars, the trees, and the plants, roses, lilies and all flowers beside.

How from Him the birds learn their songs of sweetest melody, - the nightingales, the larks and every other kind of bird whence all music that is made of man takes its source.

How from Him all things that are sweet to the taste have their sweetness — whether honey, wine, fruits, and the diversity of all kinds of spices.

How He has adorned the heavens with stars, has peopled the air with birds, has given the earth to animals and the waters to fish of kinds innumerable.

How it is He that sustains all things, and how, if He ceased to sustain and preserve them, they would return to their nothingness every one.

How He is the spring of wisdom, whence flow all treasures of wisdom and knowledge, for He is Wisdom eternal which is from everlasting to everlasting and with great power; yet He disposes all things with sweetness.

How within Himself He has the throne of the heavens; looks into the deep abyss, weighs the mountains with a balance, and encloses the earth within the palm of His hand, giving a law to the waters that they go not beyond their shores.

When thou hast meditated upon these things, in the depth of thy heart, with great joy for the beauty and power of thy Beloved and with deepest love, so that thou art enkindled therewith, do thou make thy prayer in the same manner as we described for Monday.

On Wednesday, when thou hast come to the place of prayer, signed thyself with the holy Cross, and so forth, take thou upon thyself the person of a spouse, and with deepest love make thou thy meditation after this manner:

Think how He Whom thou seekest with great

love is the glory of the world; for angels adore Him, archangels praise Him, the powers of Heaven tremble before Him, and all things serve Him.

Consider how all creatures praise Him, as is right, and how He is our hope, our salvation, our honour, our glory, and our final goal.

How He is most bounteous and ever abounds; for His are the earth and the fulness thereof, and glory and riches are in His dwelling. Think, then, if a man who has gold is called wealthy, and accounted worthy of much honour, how much more so must He be Who made all gold and precious stones and all things that are in the universe?

How this thy Beloved exhausts all comprehension, and how it is said of Him: «Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, and His greatness has no end.»

How His excellence is so great and so lofty that none may comprehend it,—neither men nor angels, nor any creature. For all things created are finite and thy Beloved is infinite; and in no way whatsoever can the finite be compared with the infinite.

When thou hast meditated upon these things with great joy at the glory and bounteousnes of thy Beloved, and with abundance of yearning love, make thou thy prayer after the same manner as we described for Monday.

On Thursday when thou hast come to the place of prayer and signed thyself with the holy Cross, do

thou take upon thyself the person of a spouse, as we have said above, and make thou thy meditation with deepest love, after this manner:

Consider how He Whom thou lovest is all love, and how he that abides in Him abides in charity, and God abides in him. Consider thou likewise how the nature of fire is to burn, kindle and give heat, and how in like manner the property of His love is to nourish and sustain to shed its graces over all, far and wide, to inflame human love and enkindle it, to save, redeem, preserve, set free and enlighten.

Consider how this thy Beloved can by no place be circumscribed, — that is to say, no place, neither any space, can surround Him, but He is in all places everywhere. For if thou descend into Hell, thou wilt find Him there, and if thou ascend into Heaven, He is there likewise. For, as Saint Bernard says, God reigns everywhere, and in every place has dominion, and His majesty likewise is everywhere, and fills all things; and in Hell He works the works of His justice, wherefore to say that there is aught that can be done in His absence is to be wanting in faith.

Consider how this thy Beloved is the reward of the saints, the joy of the angels, the mirror of all the elect, the hope of the patriarchs, the corner-stone of the prophets, the consolation of the apostles, the crown of martyrs, the light of confessors and the brightness of virgins.

When thou hast meditated upon these things

with great joy for the love of thy Beloved and the reward which He brings to His own, with enkindled affection of love, make thou thy prayer in the manner aforesaid, saying: «O Lord, Thou art my love, etc.»

On Friday, when thou hast come to the place of prayer and signed thyself with the holy Cross, take thou yet again upon thyself the person of a spouse, with deepest love, and make thy meditation after this manner:

Consider how He Whom thou desirest so greatly to love is the rule and exemplar of all things, and that the nearer a thing is to Him, the nobler must it be.

Consider how some things have being without life, others both life and being, and these latter are nobler than the former. How others have being, life and faculty of discernment, and how these, according to nature, are nobler than those before mentioned. How others, beside all this, have purity of being and virtue of knowledge, even as have the angels; and these are nearer to thy Beloved than any other creatures.

Consider how by virtue of His unsullied goodness all the qualities of an exemplar are in Him, with the quality of virtue itself and the quality of imparting itself to others.

How this thy Beloved is the ordainer of the universe, and is Himself its order; for He allots each

thing to its place, according to its condition and deserts, setting some on high, and others below them, even as the prudent painter assorts his colours, giving to this part colour, to that blackness, to another blueness, and so forth, that his work may be beautiful as a whole.

How He Whom thou seekest in love is perfection itself without defect soever, having need of naught and being in Himself wholly sufficient for everything. For there is naught better, nor worthier, nor nobler, nor more perfect than He, neither can any such thing be imagined.

How whatsoever the creature has of perfection, and whatsoever can be praised in it in a positive degree, — that is, in the lowest degree of all, — all this thy Beloved has in the superlative degree, which is the highest of all.

When thou hast considered these things, enkindled with deepest love, and hast had great joy at the exemplariness, order and perfection of thy Beloved, make thou thy prayer after the same manner as we described for Monday.

On Saturday, when thou hast come to the place of thy prayer and signed thyself with the holy Cross, take thou again the person of a spouse, as aforesaid, with deepest love, and make thy meditation after this manner:

Think first how He Whom thou lovest is tran-

quillity, and governs the whole world perpetually and unchangingly by His decree, and is the Creator of Heaven and earth.

How He commands time, so that from the beginning of the world it has remained stable, and, remaining thus, makes all things to move.

How He is the beginning, the ruler, the guide, the way and the end of all things.

How He is the goal of the devout and their most peaceful rest; and likewise is immovable and unchangeable, since He is everywhere; for we say that a thing moves when it goes to a certain place from another where before it was not; and He is therefore immovable, because He is in every place and there is no place whither He can go.

How it is He that gives rest and refreshment to all things. For He has said: « Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest ». How the soul that is firmly rooted in its Beloved, as in its centre, finds rest and tranquillity; and how that which is not thus rooted is wearied with many vain fancies.

When thou hast meditated upon these things, and considered them well within thy heart, till thou hast found pleasure therein, then make thou thy prayer, with deepest love, and with great joy in the tranquillity of thy Beloved and in the rest and refreshment which He gives, saying as aforesaid: « O Lord, Thou art my love, etc. »

On Sunday, when thou hast come to the place of prayer, and signed thyself with the holy Cross, do thou take the person either of a son or of a spouse, as we said above, and, with deepest love, make thou thy meditation after this manner following:

Think thou first of all how He Whom thou desirest most lovingly is complete sufficiency; how he that possesses Him has all things that he needs; and how he that possesses Him not is a beggar and poor. For all that is not thy Beloved satisfies not; or if it satisfies, suffices not long; and if for some time it suffices, it satisfies not continually, for it leaves much to be sought elsewhere. But he that has Him is fully satisfied, for in Him he has the goal of his desire, and there is naught that remains for him to seek.

Consider how this thy Beloved is excellent above all things that can be seen, heard, tasted, smelt, touched or felt.

How He is loftier than all of these, for He is excellent above all things that have limit, shape, or measure, or that are subject to change, or that can be circumscribed, comprehended or imagined.

How He is supremely lofty, being excellent above all things that can be demonstrated, defined, thought, examined, esteemed or understood. Nevertheless He is greatly to be loved, and greatly to be praised and to be desired above all things.

How this thy Beloved is thy most faithful trea-

sure; and where thy treasure is there is thy heart also. How that, whatsoever be taken away from thee, thou hast enough and to spare for so long as He remains with thee; for it is He Himself Who, as He said to Martha, is the one thing needful. How in Him we have our highest satisfaction; and how if the whole world abhors us and He approves us it suffices; for He is our desire and our sufficiency.

How He is the life whence all things live. For in Him we live and move; and of Him it is said: «Of Him and through Him and in Him are all things».

How this thy Beloved is called Christ, — that is to say, the Anointed. For He is that unction and balm which will give sweetness to anything in the world whereon it is placed.

How in the elect He is the savour of grace, in the damned the savour of justice and avenger of iniquity.

How this thy Beloved is the Creator, Ruler, Redeemer, Justifier, Rewarder and Glorifier.

When thou hast meditated on these perfections of thy Beloved, joyed therein and given thanks for them, let thy soul melt with love, and sleep thou and take thy rest in the peace thereof, saying:

« Waken not the bride until she desires to be awakened, and then shall I burst forth in His praises; and if I cannot worthily praise Him, yet will I not be silent, since He is a savour that is very precious to me; and whosoever tastes of Him is overcome by

His sweetness and enabled to die for His love, since he loves Him alone in the beauty of his sole Beloved.

« Where, O Lord, wilt Thou make Thy dwelling? Where wilt Thou that I seek Thee, Who art altogether sweetness and savour? O sweet Guest of the soul, be Thou my guest, and let me be with Thee for ever ».

When thou hast meditated upon these things with great joy at the sufficiency of this thy faithful treasure and the life and the unction which is in thy Beloved, with deepest love and longing sighs and desires for Him, make thou then thy prayer, according as we said for Monday.

CHAPTER XXVIII

How our thought is lifted up to God through quick and fervent love, without knowledge of the understanding, or of any other thing soever.

We have described above how the understanding is lifted up to God by meditation upon His perfections and praises, and how through the prayer of words and that of enkindled desires it is itself enkindled in love of Him. We shall now describe how the spirit, which for some time has been exercised in the manner aforesaid, is lifted up to God without any labour of the understanding or of aught else soever, and is united with Him, the which union is called by the saints true wisdom. As Saint Dionysius says, this wisdom is known by means of our ignorance; for no reasoning or understanding or human knowledge can raise the exercitant to a union after this manner, such union and such feelings being the work of God alone, Who wills to give Himself to such a spirit as this without labour of understanding on its part, but Himself aiding the affections. Wherefore it seems that our soul at this stage is receptive rather than active with regard to the understanding, and that the affection of love alone reigns within it, and neither sense nor understanding has any part therein. This is the wisdom whereof Saint James says that

every perfect gift descends from above, — that is to say, from God. This wisdom is likewise that which is so greatly exalted in the Book of Wisdom. It is not, like knowledge of every kind, born within us, being begotten by the understanding, but it arises from the exercises of our inward affections, whereof the prophet David speaks, saying: *Renuit consolari anima mea: memor fui Dei et delectatus sum et defecit spiritus meus.* That is to say that the soul which has cast away all human and fleshly delight, and is touched by this Divine wisdom, is made to rejoice by the touch of God, and lifted up on high, so that it faints away; for it suffices not to declare after any manner that which here it feels concerning its most sovereign and beloved Lord.

This wisdom has never been understood by philosophers, nor by any such as fix their understanding on bodily or fantastic objects. It is greater than all the gifts that are infused within us, with respect to the manner wherein the loftiest part of the soul is raised to God, through love; for it finds no rest in aught that is lower than God, nor yet in God Himself in that which concerns its own delight or profit, but only in the love of Him Who alone is supremely to be loved. Him it seeks and desires and loves because it feels Him to be the supreme good, and not alone supreme in goodness, but likewise far withdrawn from all defect and misery.

The blessed Saint Dionysius says in the seventh

Book of his *Divinis Nominibus* that this wisdom attains to God, its Beloved, through love, that it wearies not itself in speculations concerning Him, or in thinking of Him in any lofty speculative way whatsoever, unless this awakens love; as, for example, speculation upon the Holy Trinity, the generation of the Son, or the creation of the world, in all of which things the power of God is displayed, but there is no incitement therein to love. The soul is moved to love only by such meditations as raise it on high and enkindle it in love to its Creator and Lord, being conscious of Him without corporal similitudes whatsoever, and understanding Him after a manner that cannot be explained, so that, against the usual course of nature, He is beloved before He is known. And the manner wherein He is loved and known can be felt, but no tongue can describe it, for all this is the work of pure spirit, and naught that is corporal aids it. For our Lord God works here through Himself alone, and in this manner any person, however simple, whether a peasant or a simple old woman, may through this lofty wisdom be quickly changed into a learned disciple, if it please God to give him thereof in great quantity or in small. And this last will depend upon the preparation which a man has made, for if he prepares not himself, nor does that which in him lies, he will never attain to this manner of wisdom.

CHAPTER XXIX

That the exercitant feels and loves more than he understands or sees.

THIS fact is confirmed by the prophet David, when he says: *Gustate et videte quoniam suavis est Dominus.* By these words he shows that the true exercitant and devout man tastes of God in the first place through very love, and after this understands that whereof his heart has tasted by experience.

A second proof of this is that there are many devout and contemplative men whose love is greater than their knowledge, and than their understanding, so that the ignorant may be more devout than great ecclesiastics. Such as these have more love than understanding, and their love extends more widely; wherefore there is within them love that comes not through understanding neither by previous knowledge.

Nevertheless such love requires the light of faith, and the presence of the grace of charity. For as Saint Dionysius says at the beginning of his book on Mystical Theology: «This lofty wisdom whereof we speak is the wisdom which belongs only to one who is a true Christian and a friend of God».

Thou must note that although this holy love is granted by God to pious men without their requiring any previous knowledge, (for it takes root in the

soul only through the knowledge that we have of God by faith) yet, since this grace is not given to all in a high degree, beginners in contemplation who have not reached a lofty stage therein, need first of all, before they are enkindled in this love wherein all contemplation has its term and end, to think on the creatures and works of God, even as one that would mount on high needs a ladder. This is signified by that saying of the prophet: *In meditatione mea exardescet ignis*. That is to say that, before the soul is set on fire with the love of God, some consideration of the creatures and works of God must precede aught else, so that the soul may mount thereby as one mounts a ladder. Nevertheless, with true contemplatives and tried exercitants, the highest part of the soul soars upwards immediately, through fervour of love, without any labour of the understanding or speculative or practical knowledge of aught beside the love of God, and even without any speculative thought of God soever.

Now it may be said that Saint Augustine has these words: *Invisa amare possumus: incognita vero numquam*. That is to say, we can love that which we have not seen, but we can in no wise love that which we know not. To this I reply that according to other holy men Saint Augustine's meaning is that some kind of knowledge is needful for any contemplation, and this is true; but in the matter whereof we now speak they say that this lofty love, which

is wholly in God by virtue of His goodness, is an especial gift of God Himself; in this wise, that after no other manner can it be obtained, nor can any other give it save God alone. And this love presupposes and requires the knowledge of God which comes to us through the light of the Holy Catholic Faith, and by no other way, knowledge, labour or art of man, nor like any other common love which is enkindled and engendered after the course of nature through the natural inclination which our soul has toward the object of its love.

And here let it be observed that as it is possible for one who approaches the fire to feel the warmth thereof before its light, even so, in this matter, may the devout man who soars on high in his devotion feel the Divine love before he knows what it is that he feels. At the least this is so in this present life. In Paradise it will not be so, for there our souls will be inseparably united with that eternal and glorious light which is God. To this love he that oftimes sighs and groans within himself mounts most easily, saying, even as we said on this matter in the meditation and prayer for Monday: «O Lord, when shall I love Thee, when shall I possess Thee, when shall I embrace Thee, when shall I see Thee within myself?», etc. Such a man will soar aloft in his desire and love for the Lord, and is more surely enkindled within himself than if he were to think or all the deep secrets of eternal duration, the Divine

generation or the Divine procession; for he who harbours within himself such speculations profits little unless he harbour them that he may have the greater love for God; for love is the end of all the meditations of a man whose life is rightly ordered. And since the great philosophers have not done this, nor do present-day theologians practise it, therefore, while we deny not that they be great in speculation, we assert that they are oft-times very far from God and from all devotion and from all love and fear of Him, and likewise are great sinners.

To this most lofty and glorious wisdom refer the words of Saint Paul when he speaks of the nature of this wisdom: *Quam nullus sapientium scilicet graecorum intelligere potuit.* And of this likewise he says to the Corinthians: *Spiritus noster Spiritui divino unitus sentit quae sunt ejus; et haec est sapientia quam loquimur inter perfectos.* Even so spake our Redeemer to the Apostles ere He ascended into Heaven: *Induimini virtute ex alto.* And this is likewise signified by the vestments which the priest puts on before the altar. He begins from the head, and puts on first the amice, next the alb and lastly the chasuble; for all this holy wisdom comes from above, neither does any suffice to give it save God alone.

CHAPTER XXX

Of the works and degrees of this holy, unitive and perfective love in the soul of the devout exercitant.

THE works of this holy love and spirit of sublime contemplation in the spirit of the devout man are, according to holy men, of these six degrees: Illumination, Enkindled Love, Sweetness, Desire, Fulness and Rapture. These six degrees are symbolized by the six steps whereby the great king Solomon ascended to his lofty throne. For even so, by them, Jesus Christ ascends to the loftiest part of our soul, which is called *apex mentis*, and here He makes His abode when He has possession of it in perfect peace.

The first degree and work of this sovereign love in the soul of the contemplative is called Illumination; for when a soul has been enkindled by this holy flame, there is left in it an experimental knowledge of God. Herein the soul knows our Lord God to be the fount of all goodness, nobility and beauty, and worthy of all glory, honour, reverence and praise; and in comparison it knows itself to be the most miserable thing, the most contemptible and worthless, foul and vile, that any tongue can describe. And making this comparison between God and itself, it considers likewise how great is His sweetness and clemency, for He wills to set His treasures which

are beyond all price in places as vile as an oft-defiled conscience and a sinful soul.

The second degree and work of this holy, unitive and perfective love, which is the loftiest part of contemplation in this life, is called Enkindled Love; for the soul that is enlightened, and has experience of the grace, loftiness and nobility of our Lord God, is enkindled so greatly in love of Him that it neither thinks of aught else nor finds pleasure therein; neither does it desire to think or speak of aught else; and it abhors completely all carnal delight, from whithersoever it may come.

The third degree and work of this holy love and contemplation is Sweetness and Delight; for after the soul has received illumination from on high, and has likewise become enkindled by our glorious Lord, there is born within it an inestimable delight which is greater far than all other delights of the world, even as the sweetness of honey exceeds the sharpness and the bitterness of gall. So much is this so that the smallest particle of that sweetness is of more worth and delight to the soul than all delights that have ever been or shall be in this miserable life of the flesh.

The fourth degree is called Desire; for after the soul of the contemplative has been illumined, enkindled and led to delight in God, as has been said, it desires most fervently to be united with Him in continual love and affection, so that it would rather

suffer any kind of torment, other than sin, than be withdrawn for a single hour from that supreme delight which it has found in its Beloved.

Wherefore all other delight is death in comparison hereof, and the soul remains continually in that fervour and ardent desire to possess and never to lose that which it has experienced of its most beloved Father and Lord.

The fifth degree is called Fulness; and here the soul enjoys such satisfaction from that which it knows of the Lord that it neither seeks nor desires aught beside, but rather finds all else to be death, nor wills to possess aught else soever. Then do all other desires, joys and appetites cease, and it seems to possess God, in the possession of Whom it possesses all things, so that without Him there exists nothing, and the soul that possesses Him is sovereign queen over all things that are or can be.

From all these five degrees aforementioned, which are begotten by unitive love in the heart of the devout exercitant, proceeds the sixth, which is called Rapture of the spirit, or the soaring of a soul above itself; not that such rapture requires that a man see visions or indeed aught else with his bodily eyes, but rather that he be illumined and enkindled and refreshed and raised on high through the love which he has for his Creator. And this comes to pass in such wise that no man can tell the nature of that which he sees and feels by considering its loftiness,

goodness, beauty and nobility; the reason of this being that this Rapture is a gift of the grace of God, Who in His goodness desires to raise the devout spirit on high, and naught else suffices so to do, for it is beyond all our faculties and powers. And since this Rapture is a spiritual experience, therefore our understanding, being burdened by the flesh, cannot for a long time remain securely therein, but is scarcely raised aloft when it falls again to the ground as though it were chained to the earth. Or it is as the eye which looks upon the sun, and cannot gaze thereon fixedly, but after a single glance is forced to close itself, then looks again and forthwith closes once more: even so is it with the understanding. Or, again, it is like an arrow shot upwards, which falls quickly to the ground by reason of its own weight, or like the fish which leaps out of the water, and falls back into it immediately. Even so, as we understand it, is this degree of love.

To this sixth step or degree learned men add the two following:

The first of these is called Security; for as the soul sees itself to be so greatly beloved by its Spouse Jesus Christ, and by Him enlightened, enkindled with love and led on to delight and rapture, it conceives of Him and in Him a tranquillity so secure that there is no torment nor bodily hurt nor death in all the world which it would hesitate to suffer for love of Him; nor has it any longer fear of aught soever.

And so great is its trust in that eternal goodness which it has tasted and experienced in the Lord, that it has no fear of separation from Him any more; but rather it has a certain trust that it will be with Him eternally in glory. O how great is the joy which dwells in that soul for all time, when it sees and experiences a foretaste of the happiness whereof it has most certain expectation!

The second degree and step of these two which are added by holy men is called Perfection of Repose; for the soul in this state can be affrighted by no tribulation neither by bodily hurt or fear, and its peace and tranquillity are therefore perfect, and so great, that no tongue can describe them. Upon this Richard of Saint Victor, in his Contemplations, writes as follows: « O Christian soul, since thou mayest ascend to this paradise and dwell therein while yet thou art in this life, sell all that thou hast and all thy knowledge, that thou mayest buy this glorious possession. And think it not dearly bought, for he that sells it is Christ, and He offers to sell it to all such as will buy ».

It must be noted here that in this life we can never have full perfection in any of the three ways aforesaid whereof we have written, — namely, the Purgative Way, the Illuminative Way and the Unitive Way. But, by exercising ourselves therein, we rise to perfect purity of heart and charity so far as can be attained in this life.

In the exercise of the first Way, which is called Purgative, we seek God, but although we indeed find Him, we find Him not after the manner of fervent love. In the second Way, which is the Illuminative, we offer victims and sacrifices of praise and great desire, with hope and yearning for happiness. In the third Way, which is the Unitive, we find Him Whom our soul loves and desires.

So that in the first Way we forsake the lusts of the world; in the second, the spirit is enlightened and raised on high; in the third, it has tranquillity and rest in God.

Yet think thou not that in this present life thou canst purify thyself of all concupiscence, for this even the blessed Saint Paul could not do, — that is to say, we cannot attain to that perfection which is wholly free from lust, even as Saint Augustine says, and the author of the treatise *Beatus Vir*. Neither can we raise our affections wholly on high, while we still live here below, so that no part of us dwells upon the earth; for this our mortal habitation weighs down the understanding so that it thinks upon many things which are of the earth. Much less can we be pure and meet in heart to live in continual union with God. For while we are yet in this body we are pilgrims and live far from God.

Up to this point we have spoken of the practice of the three Ways aforementioned; and since by meditation and prayer thou mayest come in due

course and order to the term of the soul's desire, which is union with God, therefore we shall cease now to speak of this Unitive Way and enquire briefly of what manner thy contemplation must be that thou mayest come thereby to the goal of union.

PART THE FOURTH

CHAPTER XXXI

That great learning is knowledge but not wisdom, and that it is in no way essential to contemplation.

ALTHOUGH many saints and learned doctors have spoken of contemplation with great subtlety; as for example, Saint Gregory in his Morals and Saint Bernard in his book on the Song of Songs, and Richard of Saint Victor in his book on Contemplation, and many others, it is the learned who will have recourse to such treatises. For ourselves, we shall treat briefly of contemplation in this place for those that are not learned, albeit we have spoken at some length hereof already.

First, we set down this fact, that great wealth of knowledge is not necessary to the contemplative, for much science and learning, and knowledge of the Divine law and of Holy Scripture, though they are a great help to such as desire to rise to the heights of contemplation, are at times very hurtful to many likewise. The which thing comes to pass, not because of any inherent evil in them, but by reason of the puffing up which they cause in many. By one way alone can a man come to true contemplation, namely, by the way of humility, even as the apostle says: *Si quis inter vos videtur sapiens esse in hoc seculo: stultus fiat ut sit sapiens.* That is: Let a man humble

his understanding, counting himself a fool with respect to Divine wisdom, and as one unable to comprehend the judgment of the works of God. Hence is it that there is naught which has barred the way of learned men to the acquisition of contemplation so much as their lack of humility. For a man must bring his understanding into captivity and into submission before the mysteries of the Redemption which was wrought by our great Redeemer, the humility of His actions, and the example which He has left us. And in truth he that enters not by this low and humble gate is a thief, and his labour is in vain. For the Lord Himself says: He that walks with his head on high, in the vanity of his understanding, — that is, esteeming his understanding and knowledge very greatly, — and disdains to become in this matter as a little child: such a man will never be able to enter by this gate of humility, but will stumble and turn back, even as did those disciples of our Redeemer of whom it is written that they went away through inability to understand Him when He taught them mysteries concerning His Body. The same thing has happened oft-times to men of great learning. Would to God that they had never come to such learning, but had ever remained in their simplicity, even as did their mothers, who had no learning soever. Not through any fault that is in learning itself, which is very profitable, and is of great advantage to one that uses it humbly and in the grace of God. But by

reason of their pride, for, as the apostle says, learning puffs a man up. This happens to persons according to the complexion and variety of their dispositions; for we know by experience that the best wine is of no little harm to such as are in a fever, even as a sword will do harm to one that is mad and may kill himself therewith. We see likewise that light is hurtful to those whose eyes are weak, though it is pleasant, sweet and delightful to those whose eyes are strong. Even so, learning is very hurtful to a man that is ill-disposed and has little order in his habits.

CHAPTER XXXII

What persons are best suited for contemplation.

SAINT Gregory says, in the sixth book of his *Morals*, that there are some men, whether naturally or by temperament or habit, that are so strongly inclined to exterior things and worldly occupations, that they cannot soar to the heights of contemplation, but are much better suited to an active life; and if such men as these were to strive after contemplation they would fall into great errors and blasphemies, because the more leisure they have for quiet meditation the less they can resist the storms and passions of their hearts. Wherefore these should find employment in the active life.

Others there are whose spirits are by nature calm and tranquil: if active work oppresses them they quickly break down under it, but in meditation upon the works of God and the heavenly life they live with great happiness. Considering these things, and meditating with all humility upon their salvation, they withdraw their minds as far as they are able from immoderate activity. Many times men have fallen beneath the burden of the occupations of this life when they might have lived happily in quiet contemplation of God. Being occupied, however, in outward things, they have been apt rather to faint than to reap advantage from them.

Others again there are who, whether by habit, or by the strength which comes from contemplation, or from the excellence of the love which they have for God, or from a temperament inherited from their parents, have a spirit which is apt and versatile, so that they may use the one hand, as it were, as easily as the other, — that is to say, they can give themselves, now to the active life, now to the contemplative. From such men as these it is fitting to elect prelates.

Those that are in the first of these classes and divisions,—namely, those who by temperament or habit are best suited to outward activities, — do oft-times err if they leave these outward occupations and practices and plunge into profound meditation. Further it happens frequently that those in the second class are persons that are simple and have no learning; and these of a certainty may be left alone to meditate continually upon their salvation, and be given no worldly occupation soever. Hence it is manifest that because a man is simple he is not to be forbidden the contemplative life; for we have seen, and do still see by experience, in devout hermits, and also occasionally in women, that they have drawn more profit from this contemplative life, and grown to love God more deeply thereby, than many notable clerks have done and learned religious. The reason of this, according to Gerson in his *Mount of Contemplation*, is that the contemplative life is attained more quickly by simple and devout humility than by great learning;

even as Solomon says when speaking of the wisdom of God, that it walks with the simple, and its conversation is with them; and elsewhere we are commanded to seek God in the simplicity of our hearts, because He Himself is most simple and by simplicity is found.

CHAPTER XXXIII

How, according to the doctors, there is a great difference between wisdom and knowledge.

A great difference is made by holy men between knowledge and wisdom, and principally by the blessed Saint Bernard. For knowledge belongs to the understanding, and is related to it alone, but wisdom belongs to the affections; whence according to its name, wisdom *(sapientia)* signifies a science which is of great sweetness *(sapida scientia),* the which sweetness has to do with the affection, desire, appetite and will, wherein wisdom consists. Wherefore a man may have great science or knowledge, but little or no wisdom. The reason for this, according to Gerson, is that he may have no relish or affection for that which he knows. This Gerson explains by examples. A man may know the nature of honey, because from time to time he has heard it spoken of, or has read of it in books, without ever having tasted its sweetness. Further, physicians know the nature of diseases, and frequently know them better than patients or those that suffer from them; but with respect to the pain thereof it is clear that the patient knows more than the physician, not by any science, but by experience. After this manner a man may have great science, or knowledge, concerning some

person, yet without any feeling of love or of hatred, of pleasure or of displeasure, in regard to such person. And on the other hand a man may conceive great affection or pleasure for a thing without great knowledge thereof; and according to this we can understand and realise that a man may have great wisdom without knowledge either great or clear, and contrariwise great and clear knowledge or science without great wisdom. From this we see plainly the difference that is between men that are simple and devout and learned men who are less devout, with respect to contemplation.

CHAPTER XXXIV

How the contemplative life must begin with the labour of the active life.

THE first degree which pertains to the state of beginners and imperfect souls is that of humble confession, together with penance, whereby a man mortifies within himself worldly love and evil desires, and likewise unlawful motions and evil habits. After this manner he chastises and subdues his flesh, that it may be subject to the soul, and not rebellious; and this he does by fasts, vigils, abstinences, afflictions, tears, groans and many sighs, and by bodily exercise and labour imposed upon him by holy obedience. He that desires quickly to experience the perfect and contemplative life before practising such penance, exercise and labour, deceives himself, and is to be compared to a man that with one bound would reach the summit of a lofty mountain. Wherefore, according to Saint Gregory and other saints, the active life, which is rooted in bodily afflictions and bodily labours, must be lived before the contemplative, and by means of it the path which leads to the contemplative life is made ready.

Of this we have a figure in the story of Jacob's serving seven years for Rachel, who is here a type of the contemplative life. Nevertheless he was first offer-

ed her sister Leah, by whom is symbolised the active life. And here it is to be noted, that, as Gerson says, youths who are still full of carnal temptations and vices, and likewise great sinners who have squandered a large part of their lives in sin, cannot and must not attempt to give themselves wholly to the perfect life of contemplation, without practising the exercises of the active life aforementioned. For while they would be supposing that their meditations were of God, and in a secret place were making prayers that were pure, they would rather be thinking more often upon their evil inclinations, and would become not better than before but worse. For this reason Seneca counsels that a man should not dwell alone for a long time, and for the same cause all holy men and philosophers reprove idleness. Yet both Seneca and the same holy men praise solitude and leisure for contemplation in such as are well schooled thereto, that they may serve God therein with the greater freedom. This has been done by many devout hermits and good religious.

CHAPTER XXXV

That some, to whom is given a singular grace, are not to be imitated by all.

To some, by the especial grace of God, it has been given to dwell in solitude from their youth up, as it was given, for example, to our father Saint Benedict. Yet in his Rule Saint Benedict does not counsel all to live alone, nor do other holy doctors do so, saying rather that none should do this, or attempt it, and that a singular grace which has been given to this man or to that must not be made into an argument or be imitated by all. And they who have at times dared to disregard such advice, and have sought the solitude and leisure of the hermit, without first labouring and practising the active life, receiving sound instruction and growing accustomed to life in a community, have been deceived and fallen miserably.

The reason, according to the aforementioned Gerson, is that they have endeavoured to fly before they have had wings, and to engage in warfare with the most terrible of enemies before overcoming adversaries less formidable, namely, the world and the flesh. Wherefore Gerson adds that he has no great confidence in certain hermits of his own day, who assert that they have progressed greatly through soli-

tude, and he thinks the same to be true of women and other persons living as solitaries. He says likewise, writing to his own sisters: « Ye know, most beloved sisters, how great is the need which ye have suffered up to this present, and how great have been your labours, whereof nevertheless some of you had need before ye could become solitaries and live in secret and give yourselves completely to meditation upon God in the retreats of hermits and recluses. For we may live in solitude, not only in forests and desert places, but wheresoever we find a place meet and fit for withdrawal from the world and for avoidance of its bustle, cares and occupations ». For this reason we see that in religious orders which are fitly governed, beginners and novices are given much work to do in learning the Divine offices, in labours of other kinds, in vigils, fasts, and chanting, that by means of these things they may have less time for unruly thoughts, concerning other things, which else might crowd upon them. But others who are well accustomed to such penances as these, and who have learned to overcome temptations and carnal and evil thoughts, are permitted to be in solitude, and given no work, for a greater space of time. Some, on the other hand, are of a temperament and nature suited to strife, whereby they may overcome and subdue their temptations, yet are unsuited to the perfect life of contemplation: these it is well to occupy continually in the labours of the active life. And

many kinds of persons belong to this class: whereas there are others who are greatly impeded by the active life, and find it a great burden. Again it comes to pass that certain persons are so well ordered and governed by nature, or perchance by the especial grace of God, that they make greater progress in a day by giving themselves wholly to contemplation than others will make in a year.

Yet I do not mean that a man should apply himself to one kind of life in such a way that he may never be occupied in the other, whether for a longer or a shorter time, according to the season, and according as he finds himself able to make progress. He must never give himself so completely to the active life that he cannot think upon God and upon his conscience, confess his sins and do penance. And on the other hand he must not give himself to contemplation so as never to do work that is necessary. That is to say that in the same person Martha must ever be present with Mary, and Mary with Martha, to a greater or a less degree, according as we have said. The manner of life of a man will take its name, however, from that kind of life to the duties whereof he chiefly devotes himself.

CHAPTER XXXVI

That the love of God is both the beginning of the contemplative life and the end thereof.

THE root and the beginning of the contemplative life must be the love of God: that is, for love of Him the life of this world must be abandoned, together with all exterior cares and occupations. The contemplative must give himself to God alone, for he that does the contrary deceives himself, and oftimes comes not to the goal of his desire, unless he amends his ways and does penance. As there are some who enter the religious life or devote themselves to study, not from love of God, but from love of idleness, that they may have an excuse for fleeing from the labours of this world, or at times that they may gain a livelihood, or through pride and vanity and the desire to be held notable and devout religious, or through curiosity and the mere desire for knowledge, as was the case with the great philosophers. Furthermore, the end of the contemplative life must be the love of God; that is, from love and affection towards God a man must strive to progress from that which is good to that which is better, and desire to withdraw himself from all other work and occupation. And this withdrawal I understand principally of worldly activity, which is a notable

impediment to contemplation. I know well that a short time spent in moderate employment is frequently necessary and of great advantatge to the contemplative life and it keeps a man from sloth and from the evils of melancholy.

That the end of the contemplative life is Divine love is borne out by those words of the Apostle: *Plenitudo legis est dilectio.* That is to say: the end of the Divine law is love. Wherefore, in the law of God, which is called wisdom or theology, that man should be accounted the most excellent master or doctor who has the deepest love for God. For such a man lives a more perfect life and his state is nobler when he loves more ardently and more deeply; and, since the contemplative life is that which is most fitting to the adept therein, as leading to the greatest love for God, as though it were a school or university for the teaching of this art of love, therefore is this life of contemplation most highly praised and most generally approved in Holy Scripture and by holy doctors, and principally by Jesus Christ, the true God of love, when He declared that Mary had chosen the better part. What, then, is this better part? It is certainly that which she chose by sitting at the feet of the Lord, giving ear to His words, and finding herself, as she listened, enkindled with love for Him.

Yet thou must note that many times one man may have more love for God in the active life than another in the contemplative life; and in this case

the active is the more perfect, albeit his state has in itself less of perfection than the contemplative state; as far as his own life is concerned it is more perfect than that of the contemplative, albeit the contemplative is in general more perfect than the active. Wherefore it seems that such as think the end of the contemplative life to be naught but knowledge and the acquiring of new truths are deceived; for the true end thereof is the love of God, since in it a man may taste how sweet is God and how gracious. And indeed this taste, or sweetness, or spiritual manner of perception, may be called a mode of knowledge, for such a love is knowledge, even as Saint Augustine says. This knowledge is of such a kind, and so secret, that it may be known of none save of him that has it; for neither by words nor by instruction can it be explained or demonstrated to another; just as we are accustomed to say of a severe illness that none can know the pain thereof save him that suffers it.

CHAPTER XXXVII

In what consists the perfection of the contemplative life, described by a similitude of worldly love.

BEFORE going further, it is now fitting to explain in some manner wherein consists the perfection of the contemplative life. Although in the foregoing chapter we said that the love of God was the end of this contemplative life, it may nevertheless be added, in the words of Gerson, that this same end is, and should be, that of all our works, for all that we do must be done and ordered for the love of God. Wherefore I must here set down certain conditions of the contemplative life, not that I have myself sufficient knowledge thereof, but rather as a blind man speaking of colours, repeating such things as the saints in their writings have left us, and leaving the rest to those who are more expert in these matters.

And that we may the more easily apprehend what is that love of God to which the perfection of the contemplative life will lead us, I would demonstrate this by means of its contrary, — that is to say, by means of worldly love, which we know better and which is more familiar to us than Divine love. Let us see, then, what this worldly love can accomplish in a man who is deeply engulfed therein, — in the love of silver, gold, honour, dignity or the lusts of

the flesh. It is certain that by reason of such love a man first becomes weak, through the desire of possessing that on which all his love is set, and this overdeeply. Next, he fixes his mind and all his heart and his understanding upon the object of his love so firmly that he can think of naught else save of that object. And this in such a way that he forgets himself and loses all shame, and there is naught that can keep him back or withdraw him from that which he loves, — neither trial, nor suffering, nor danger, nor death, nor the counsel of his friends, nor the fear of God, nor all His judgments. Sleeping, he dreams of the object of his love; waking, he cares neither to hear nor to speak of aught else, so that he loses, in some degree, his reason, and becomes as one that is inebriated or passionate or mad. Naught can separate or hinder a man from such love; nor is there aught that he would shrink from or refuse to suffer if only he might attain to the object of his worldly love, so greatly is he enkindled and even tortured by it. Yea, he forgets all that is good, whether in this present life or in the life to come; so that, if any speaks to him by chance of Paradise, or death, or Hell, it seems to him to be a dream or a fable. Nor can he receive or retain a spiritual thought, for howsoever short a space, for worldly or carnal love is lord over him, and drives such meditations from him instantly.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

What kind of love of God the contemplative ought to have.

ACCORDING to the example which we have given let us also consider in like manner how the love of God should be such as to make a man despise the world entirely, and forget it completely, even as worldly love makes a man forget God. For this love should be so strong and ardent, and so deeply rooted in the heart, that he who is possessed thereby should be able to think of naught else, whether voluntarily, spontaneously or freely; nor should he fear contempt, or take note of abuse or threats or persecutions, or even of death, if only he have this love of God. And all things that he sees and hears in this world, and that are brought to his memory, should be to him as a dream or a fable; he should reckon them as naught by comparison with God and His glory; and, in a word, he should be considered in the judgment of the world as one that is drunken or mad; for he cares but little for the things of this world, esteeming them less highly even than the things of God and of Heaven are esteemed by such as are absorbed in the love of this world.

This, I say, would be that perfect love of God which the contemplative must labour to attain by

way of the contemplative life. And one living in a state of such love would be rightly said to have died and to be crucified to the world; for naught can hinder him from living to God alone and from sleeping to the vanities of this world. Only to the good things of eternity would he be awakened, and all the senses of his body would be closed and asleep to the doings of men of this world, and opened only to the joys of the saints. It is this which, according to holy doctors, is figured by the example of Moses who, when he desired to speak with God, entered into a thick cloud. For by this we learn that he who would possess the love of God must enter likewise into such a cloud, which will cause him to forget the things pertaining to this world, and neither to see nor to hear them.

Let us now set forth the manner wherein to attain this love which is the end of the contemplative life. He that has reached it has already climbed the summit of the mount where Christ was transfigured with His three disciples. Here he speaks with God even as did Moses when he received the law. Here he is lifted up in spirit, or rather above his spirit. Here he has his conversation in the heavens. Here he lives by love, walking in the light of joy and tranquillity without any darkening of smoke. But alas, brethren! To how few is given this grace, and for how short a time it continues while we are still in this place of exile!

CHAPTER XXXIX

Of two manners of silence and solitude.

ACCORDING to the diversity of states and the variety of the qualities of men, each one may choose for himself a secret place wherein he may take his rest in peace and silence; yet in very truth our chiefest secret place of silence must be within the soul rather than without. That is to say that the soul must cast out from itself and from its dwelling-place all worldly and human cares, and all vain and hurtful activities, and everything that may hinder it from coming to the place whither it journeys.

At times it comes to pass that a man is alone in the body and withdrawn from the company of others, yet none the less he suffers phantasies, and cogitations and thoughts of melancholy, and finds within himself most heavy and burdensome company. And such phantasies engender in him delirium and turmoil, and cause him to speak much and be garrulous within his understanding. For the eyes of his understanding see first one thing, and afterwards another: now he is led into the kitchen, now to the market: before him are brought carnal and unclean delights, dances, songs, women of great beauty and such like vanities. And these things lead him into evil and sin, even as Saint Jerome confesses of himself humbly. For

when he was in the desert, and had no company save the wild beasts and scorpions, nevertheless he was from time to time led by his imagination to the dances and companionship of Roman women.

Furthermore, these phantasies cause the soul that is alone to become impassioned, and strive with persons that are absent as though they were present, abusing and insulting them. Again, a man that is in this state will in imagination count his money, trade therewith and amass great treasure. Or again, his desires will carry him over the sea, through divers countries, to positions of great dignity, and so forth. With such phantasies and follies as these a man that is alone in the body is oft-times filled.

Such a man as this is in no wise alone or in solitude, save in an outward sense; nor indeed is the devout soul alone that is disposed to contemplation, — nay, it is never less alone. And great also is the difference between the absence of these two kinds of solitude. The devout and contemplative soul is not alone, for it is in the best of all company, most profitable and full of delight,-that is to say, in the company of God and of His saints, of holy desires and devout and holy meditations. The other is in companionship that is very hurtful and in nowise profitable, since it wanders from place to place without advantage.

CHAPTER XL

Which discusses the manner wherein the contemplative life is of profit to him that leads it.

For three reasons, or motives, among others, some persons marvel at a man who gives himself to the life of contemplation. The first of these is because, as they say, contemplatives profit none save themselves. Secondly, because they think that the contemplative man seeks to enquire and know overmuch, and to soar exceeding high. Thirdly, because many are deceived and become foolish and melancholy. To these three reasons, if indeed they may be given that name, Gerson makes reply by referring to the holy doctors who speak of this matter abundantly, subtly and profoundly. To the first he replies that a contemplative reaps far more profit for himself than an active, and therein is more pleasing to God. And this suffices, for there is naught, after God, which I should love more than myself, or more than the whole of the world. Wherefore I must choose what pleases myself, namely, to accept the life whereby I shall be the more acceptable to God; whereas, if I were to save another, and win some small merit thereby, I might myself suffer detriment and bring about my damnation.

This is to be understood as referring to one who

is so far free that he can follow the one kind of life as easily as the other. I say this for the sake of those that hold public offices, and for prelates, and for those having other dignities which oblige them to lead an active life; and likewise for married women who have to govern their children and their household; and for those that are obliged to serve their parents. If such as these desired to devote themselves to contemplation, when the obligation is upon them to attend to the affairs of others, they would do themselves great harm; and to each of these it would be an evil and a perilous temptation to engage in contemplation, which is for them the most delightful choice, and to be negligent or to defer fulfilling their obligations, which would be very harmful and likewise hurtful to the public weal. But it is quite otherwise with one that is not obliged to serve others by reason of the office which he holds.

CHAPTER XLI

Of the profit which contemplatives bring to others.

I now proceed to show that the contemplative brings much profit to others as well as to himself. For he gives them an example of a good life, preaching in deed and in fact that God is to be loved above all things, and that all things else are vanity, and no heed is to be given to them. And this is no contemptible teaching, but is all the more excellent because deeds are ever looked up to more than words.

Further, contemplatives bring profit to other men by their devout prayers. Oft-times it happens that through their merits God will work great good to worldly men, although these be evil: He will give, for instance, peace or other similar thing to some kingdom. We can do naught without the especial grace of God, and this is obtained by the holy prayers of contemplatives more readily than by actives; the contemplative indeed is, like the eyes of a body, illumining and guiding other members thereof in all their works. And if the work of the eyes is not the same as that of the hands and feet, it must not be supposed by this that they serve none but themselves. For they are brought into their way of life that they may refer to God and guide aright the works of those that are not enlightened and uplifted

in spiritual things; for those that are so enlightened know of themselves how they must ever turn to God in all that they do, though they be still in this world.

I do not say this meaning that in case of necessity a contemplative should not leave his way of life to minister to the necessity of another; for could a man lead both the active and the contemplative lives together, and lead them perfectly, this would be the best life of all, even as was that of Saint Gregory and Saint Bernard and others. And if we compare the excellence of the soul with that of the body, and spiritual profit with worldly profit, we shall clearly perceive that the devout prayer of one contemplative is of greater advantage to the whole church than are two hundred prayers of men who lead the active life, and are not occupied in obedience, but minister to the bodily necessities of others. And contemplatives themselves profit more than men who are occupied in the world not in order to minister to others, but merely to work for their own advantage, and indeed at times for the harm of others.

I say, therefore, that if a man by the influence of the Holy Spirit should feel himself inclined and moved to follow the contemplative life, and should become aware of this, not by trusting in himself, since it is easy for him to be deceived by an angel of Satan in the form of an angel of light, but through the counsel of some spiritual man, such a man, with-

out despising the active life in any way, will be enabled to follow the contemplative life, and this will bring him great praise, and his reward will not be light, unless perchance he acted through being bound to obey his superior or to undertake some public office, or give help in cases of extreme or urgent need. And by an urgent need I mean one which, unless it be met, will cause a man to perish.

CHAPTER XLII

That it is not pride to engage in the contemplative life, as some believe; and this we show by examples.

With regard to the second reason of those which are alleged, it cannot, as Gerson reasons, be truly said, that one who engages in contemplation after the manner aforesaid,—that is, that he may love God after the loftiest manner and with all his heart —soars unduly high, or acts presumptuously. Rather, if a man be fitted for this work, and have received from God grace sufficient for it, he would clearly be found wanting, and fail in his duty, if he used not the gift of God, —above all, if he were an ecclesiastic or a religious, and living under a rule. Such a man as this should ever embrace the contemplative life rather than the active, for otherwise the learning of those that are clerks, and especially of theologians, would aid them not at all, but they would by reason thereof become puffed up, and grow vain, hollow and proud.

By the following example the truth which we have postulated becomes plain. In the court of the king there is a man who works in the kitchen, on whom the king bestows some honour, — making him, let us say, his chamberlain, because he thinks him suitable for that office, and because he is pleased so to exalt

him. It is certain that if this servant refuses the honour, by reason of his slothfulness, faintheartedness, gluttony or greed, saying that he would rather remain at his work in the kitchen, this man would be reprehensible in the extreme. In like manner, he that can serve God in an exalted office will be adjudged guilty of a great fault if he desires to occupy himself continually in lesser things; nor will he be excused for his humility, which will rather be imputed to the deceitfulness or lukewarmness of his heart. I say likewise that those who in their contemplation seek to enquire into things too carefully do greatly err and fail; for to such is necessary above all things humility, which is the guardian and the nurse of charity.

CHAPTER XLIII

Of the greater excellence which contemplatives have than actives.

With respect to the third objection, — namely, that certain contemplatives are deceived, and become foolish and melancholy,—the aforesaid Gerson replies thereto as follows. He shows that in the active life also many are deceived, because they use not needful discretion nor bring to an end the work which they have undertaken. Neither is the grace to live the contemplative life given to all men, for certain reasons whereof we have already made mention. For as the Apostle says: «Each man has his own gift from God, some after one manner and some after another». And further he says: «If all the members of a body were eyes, where would be the hands, and so forth?»

It is true that men of the world lightly judge contemplatives to be foolish and given to melancholy, because they are not like themselves, and despise all those things which men of the world most chiefly love. They see not the greatness of the consolations, the holiness of the works, and the riches of the spirit to which contemplatives attain, by despising the world and casting far from themselves all avarice, envy, wrath and vanity. This vanity causes worldly men no little

vexation, while contemplatives live in great tranquillity and peace of mind, which is so great a blessing that no other can be compared with it. In place of their worldly occupations which are confined to this sphere of the earth, and treat of things so small, the said contemplatives live and are occupied in a greater and more spacious sphere than the whole world, namely, in God Himself.

Those that are experienced in this matter know well what is meant by the things whereof I speak. It is certain that the rational life of the creature is centred in the operation of the understanding and of the reason more than in any other thing, — that is, in meditations of the reason and in love of the will. Wherefore they alone can be truly said to live who are refreshed by this food and drink in contemplation; and not those who raise not up their souls and their lives toward heavenly things more than do the beasts. For such as these eat and drink, and make merry and are glad, laugh and enjoy such things as endure not. They labour with their bodies, and do after this manner as the beasts. Will such as these say perchance that by their labours they do good to others? The horse or the ass does as much good as they, and at times even more. It is true that he who is unskilled and can do no more than this is to be praised, if he fulfil it faithfully and with a true intention and worthy aim, — namely, that of serving God and ministering to his neighbour. Further, I

confess that contemplatives in worldly deeds are less prudent and wise than actives: the reason whereof, according to the doctor aforesaid, is that they set not their intent and talent upon these things. For this cause they are accounted as simple men, and not as wise. But they have little care about this, for they are called to the state wherein they live, as the Apostle says, and they strive therein with all their might, namely, that they may be accounted as fools and in the end become truly wise.

CHAPTER XLIV

How necessary to the contemplative is the grace of God.

We have explained above to some extent that there is a twofold silence, — the one without the soul and the other within it, — and that the work of contemplation is to attain not to this outward secretness and silence but to that which is within. To this end are necessary the silence and the retirement of the cell. For, as Saint Bernard says, the Spouse of the soul, Jesus Christ, is like a bashful lover, and gives not Himself freely to His spouse in the presence of many, desiring rather to be alone with her. Wherefore it behoves the soul to cast out wholly from itself all occupations, whether outward or inward, and be occupied only in receiving its Spouse, since He is simplicity and unity and desires to be sought in simplicity and unity of the heart. And a heart has neither unity nor simplicity when it is distracted and torn asunder by human cares, which are evil and vain. Alas, brethren, into what misery has our noble human soul been led by sin, the which soul was created in a state of complete innocence to think upon its God and Creator and to consider spiritual things without impediment or defect! And what a marvel that even now, though with the greatest difficulty and pain, and weighed down by the burden of its corruption, it can

perform any of this work! Yet that it does so is known well to those who strive to perform it.

O my God, what thing is there that can raise such a soul aloft, and bring it into Thy oneness, and lead it back to its first state of simplicity, and deliver it from this stormy and tumultuous sea, its infinitude of cares, its divers phantasies and the whelm of its swift-rushing imaginings? Of a truth, Lord, none can do this, unless the virtue of Thy grace can still the movements of this sea which is within us and is so vast and wide.

Thou, Lord, dost raise the needy and prostrate soul from the dust of its vain cogitations. Thou dost lift up the poor man from the dunghill of unruly pleasures. Both these Thou dost set on high, that they may sit with princes, — that is, with the angels and the saints, — and have their conversation in the heavens. But this gift of grace is bestowed upon those alone who diligently and fervently seek it and dispose themselves that they may receive it.

CHAPTER XLV

Of the manner wherein the contemplative soul is said to be raised above the body and to be made simple and undivided.

We must not understand that the soul leaves the body according to its substance when, as commonly occurs, it is enraptured in contemplation. Rather at such times it is said to be where its heart and its love are. For, as Saint Augustine says, the soul is more truly where it loves than where it quickens, - that is, where it gives life to the body. I say, therefore, that the lifting up of the devout soul above the world, and above bodily things, unto itself, or unto the angels, or even unto its Creator, than which there is no higher degree, is brought about through earnest and devout meditation or by fervent love.

This meditation or love is so powerful in its virtue that it makes the soul forget or cease from all other workings and phantasies, as though it were in perfect repose or sleep; and if such workings cease not entirely, yet they cannot corrupt, quench or overwhelm meditation, or the said fervent love, by reason of its most potent might.

Furthermore, it is fitting that the soul should be occupied in such meditation and love alone, and

wholly intent thereon, with no care soever for any other thing, nor regard for such thing, passing them quickly and staying not its pace for them. That it is possible, in lesser matters, to be intent after this manner we see clearly from daily experience. Aristotle affirms it, saying that it sometimes comes to pass that a man is meditating on some matter so deeply that even though his eyes be open he will look not at that which passes in front of them; and many things will oft-times be said by those in whose company he is, or will be done and practised in his presence, without his knowing it; and he will continue in his deep meditation as though he were asleep. Wherefore this common proverb is sometimes used of such a man: «He is thinking of his loves».

After this manner students are sometimes enraptured, when they are engaged in composing some subtle thing, and likewise painters, and others who work subtly, and exercise their imaginings strongly. We read about Archimedes, a philosopher and an excellent geometrician, that he was wont to deliberate, and in his imaginings construct subtle engines to be used in battle, and in defence and attack upon cities. It came to pass that the city wherein he dwelt was taken by an enemy, and the prince of the invading army commanded that the said philosopher should not be put to death. It chanced that a soldier met him, and found him absorbed in the work of his imagining, and asked him his name. But so fixed and

intent was he upon his thoughts that he neither knew nor understood that which was asked him, save by making a sign that he should not be disturbed. And as he said naught, the soldier took his life. Consider how deep was the meditation of this man, who by reason thereof was unconscious of the taking and conquest of the city wherein he dwelt and of the very enemy who slew him.

Another philosopher, called Neades, was accustomed to sit down to table and forget to eat; and that he might not perish of hunger his servant had to take the food and give it to him with her own hand. Concerning this man, Valerius, who narrates the story, says that he lived for the sake of his soul alone, and was, as it were, imprisoned within the body, which was to him as a thing that was strange and useless.

We have quoted these examples to show that the soul can cast out all imaginings and cares which profit it not, and rise and soar aloft to other things which are holier and more profitable. After this manner, it may be brought to an estate of unity and simplicity, by meditating on the manner wherein it can attain to its Creator, Who is its native home, its goal and its love. It may be a harder and a more laborious task to do this than in the examples which we have expounded, the more so because we have to use thoughts more spiritual, and meditations more unusual and lofty.

CHAPTER XLVI

On divers manners wherein holy men have written of contemplation.

RICHARD of Saint Victor wrote a book which contains five parts, wherein he treats the subject of contemplation with great subtlety and profound knowledge, distinguishing therein six kinds or manners. Of these manners two are set by him in the imagination, and two in the reason, and two more in the intellect. And the said doctor sets within the soul three kinds of heavens, according as the soul works successively in divers manners in her thought or meditation—namely, in meditating upon bodily objects which are received by the external senses, or upon herself, or upon the angels and their estate, or even in contemplating the Deity. And in the fifth part of the said book Richard shows how contemplation is formed or diversified after three manners. Sometimes the soul is, as it were, enlarged. Sometimes, moreover, it is greatly raised in the understanding. And at other times the understanding is, as it were, beside itself, and forgetful of itself completely. And, further, Richard explains the manner wherein this comes to pass, and how it is done, by citing authorities and examples from Holy Scripture. It may come to pass through great wonder, or great devotion,

or through no small delectation and consolation of the spirit. But since my intention here is not to speak subtly, but plainly and briefly, both because subtlety in these matters pertains to great theologians, and likewise because they are too high for my understanding, we shall say little of these and shall treat of other degrees of contemplation which are better suited to the simple and devout, and which holy men have practised, making trial of them first and afterwards treating of them in writing.

Saint Augustine, in the book of his Confessions, describes a certain manner of meditation which he practised with his own mother, when seated at a window which overlooked a garden, not long before his mother's death.

Saint Gregory, in his *Morals,* speaks at great length of contemplation, describing both its peril and its profit, but he treats not in that place of any particular method of entering thereon, or exercising oneself therein. Saint Jerome, writing to the virgin Saint Julia Eustochium, describes among other things a manner of meditation, the which is that she should think upon the hour of her death, and of the reward which she will then receive. How the Virgin, Our Lady, with her Son, Our Redeemer, and the holy angels and virgins will come forth to receive her, singing that song which Miriam, the sister of Moses, sang after the passing of the Children of Israel through the Red Sea: *Cantemus, Domino, gloriose, etc.* And

moreover the said Saint Jerome says of himself that, after grievous temptations and long beating of his breast, and much time spent in weeping and tears, he besought the help of God, and it seemed to him that he was in the presence of the company of the angels, through the great peace and joy of his conscience which, after his penitence and tribulation, God had sent to him from Heaven.

All doctors for the most part agree upon this, that it is good to meditate upon the fearful pains of Hell, the joys of Heaven, a man's own sins and the vanity of the world. And since we have spoken at length of these matters in writing upon the Purgative, Illuminative and Unitive Ways, we now seek another manner of contemplation.

Saint Bernard, in wellnigh all his sermons upon the Song of Songs, treats of one manner of prayer, namely of the spiritual marriage between God and the soul, wherein he is followed by a doctor who has recently written upon such a spiritual marriage between Divine Wisdom and the soul after the same manner. This book of his is entitled *The Clock of Eternal Wisdom*. And in truth this manner of prayer is lofty, subtle and fraught with great peril, especially to such as desire to practise it at the beginning of their conversion. The reason whereof, according to Gerson, is that these novices, who are as yet unpractised in prayer, would lightly fall into remembrance of the matrimony of the flesh, if they entered

into thoughts of this union and matrimony which is of the spirit; wherefore they would become defiled and have none of the purity which they were seeking.

CHAPTER XLVII

Of the method of contemplation which was practised by Saint Bernard soon after his conversion.

SAINT Bernard recounts of himself the manner wherein, at the beginning of his conversion, he realised that he must needs perform works which were good and meritorious, the which he could not do by himself, wherefore he sought to have them of the merits of Christ our Redeemer. And from that time forward he was wont to meditate most diligently upon the whole of the life of the Lord, from His Conception to His Ascension. And from all His bitter sufferings he gathered as it were a bundle of myrrh, which he kept ever by him in his heart; and by continual remembrance thereof he began to have heartfelt sorrow; wherefore I conclude that the said blessed saint began his ascent and contemplation, by meditating upon the said life of the Lord frequently. In the same way we read of Saint Cecilia that she kept the Gospel of Christ hidden in her breast, — that is to say, she meditated ever upon His life, and ceased not, by day or by night, to speak with God and pray to Him. And the seraphic doctor Saint Bonaventura, in his book entitled *Stimulus amoris*, speaks of the same matter, and especially of the Passion of our Redeemer and Saviour Jesus Christ, saying that all good things

are found therein, and that this Passion is a gate to the way of contemplation, and he that would enter this way otherwise deceives himself. And the said holy doctor confirms this saying by the authority of the Lord, Who says: «*Ego sum via, veritas et vita.*» Which is to say: «I am the Way, the Truth and the Life». The Way: wherein we must walk. The Truth: which illumines the traveller. The life: which refreshes, upholds and rewards him.

There are many others who have no method in their contemplation save that which they find in some book of devotions, or in the life of some saint, or in other books which they read for the exercise of their devotion, according to the matter which they find therein. To such as these the use of books would always be necessary. Wherefore this method is not of itself sufficient, save if they learn to practise it without the use of books.

Others there are who learn much, and exercise themselves with great effort in contemplation, by means of the Divine offices in church; but this I judge to be very difficult, especially at the beginning; for by reason of the fatigue inseparable from chanting, it is hard to attain the perfection of contemplation, save if one be accustomed to practise it in secret.

And now, to avoid prolixity, we shall leave the numerous other methods which many devout persons have practised in the exercise and matter of contemplation, and we shall say certain other things thereof.

CHAPTER XLVIII

What contemplation is; its divers kinds; and of the subjects which the exercitant should contemplate.

ACCORDING to Richard of Saint Victor, contemplation is a fixed regard of the soul on the sights of God with marvelling and wonder. Or, according to Saint Augustine, contemplation is an enlightenment or illumination of the spirit, which inspires the soul with wholesome affection for the invisible things of God. Or, according to Hugh of Saint Victor, contemplation is a quickening of the understanding, and he who has it beholds all things clearly and knows them with open vision. As it is written: *Spiritus omnia scrutatur*. Which is to say: The spirit searcheth all things. This means that it causes men to search them, yea, even the deep things of God. Let this be sufficient concerning the meaning of contemplation.

We come now to speak of the kinds thereof, concerning which the said Richard in his book on Contemplation gives instruction as follows, after this manner.

First, he says that the contemplative must progress by three paths. The first of these is by his industry, and this, he thinks, may help him greatly; and he must labour therein with great diligence that

he may merit higher flights and be aided by God to make them. The second way is by the learning and skill of other men; and this is the means whereby many study and follow the teachings of those doctrines of the saints which we have quoted, and others likewise. The third way is by the especial grace of God, Who wills to raise men on high to a knowledge of His secrets.

The second instruction of the said doctor is that contemplation is divided into three parts.

The first is called *Mentis dilatatio,* or enlargement of the spirit. This comes to pass when the contemplative enlarges the boundaries of his mind by human industry, and extends the object of his thought.

The second is called *Mentis sublevatio,* or the lifting up of the spirit. This comes to pass when the contemplative, illumined by the especial light of God, understands things for which no human industry suffices. Yet albeit that which he understands is above the reach of human industry, the understanding is yet within itself, and neither strays nor wanders beyond itself, but rather remains within itself, although not as it was aforetime in the things to which it was accustomed.

The third part is called *Mentis alienatio,* or ecstasy of the spirit. This is that which comes to pass when the soul sees things to which its natural industry suffices not to raise it. In these visions the soul goes out of itself, and of the wonted judg-

ment of its understanding. It knows not where it is, nor what it is, nor whether it is in the body or out of the body. And this is also called rapture, whereof we have spoken in treating of the Unitive Way.

Let it be noted here that the first of these three parts, which is called enlargement of the spirit, is helped by the skill of man, and by his constant exercise and great diligence. The second, — that is, the lifting up of the spirit — is aided by the light of Heaven which the soul receives from time to time over and above its own industry, and at times above even its own knowledge, and at times above nature. After this manner were the prophets lifted up on high when they saw and told of things past and things to come, and the secrets of the hearts of men, yet without being enraptured or suffering any estrangement or rapture in themselves. The third, — that is to say ecstasy or rapture of the spirit — comes to pass within us either through excess of devotion, which arises from an exceeding great desire or love for the Lord, or through marvelling greatly at something that appears most high and wonderful, or again through an exceeding great delight or joy in that which is received within us through the especial grace of the Lord.

The third chief instruction of Richard of Saint Victor is that when the exercitant in his contemplation feels himself cold, he must warm himself after

a special manner by his own effort, that he may the sooner rise up in contemplation to meet the Lord. He must take some subject wherewith he may become enkindled in his contemplation, as we have said above in the meditations upon the three Ways, — that is, the Purgative, the Illuminative and the Unitive. But since, as we said, following the seraphic doctor Saint Bonaventura, the door whereby we enter the contemplative life is the life and passion of Christ our Redeemer, and that he who would enter therein otherwise deceives himself, we shall speak now in summary form of the life of the Lord up to the Last Supper.

CHAPTER XLIX

That the contemplative must soar in his contemplation after three manners, according to the life and passion of the Lord.

THOU must know that our Redeemer, God and Man, and Mediator between God and man, is the road whereby thou must rise to the knowledge of His Deity and to the love thereof likewise. For, as Saint Augustine says in the seventh book of his *Confessions:* «For this reason above all others Christ took our flesh, that we, who cannot know God according to the spirit, may rise to the knowledge and love of Him in the spirit through Christ the Word Incarnate». Wherefore, make for thyself three manners of contemplation upon the life and death of Christ, by means of devout exercises.

Let the first stage in that contemplation be to draw near to Christ with sweet affection and heartfelt desire, albeit after an earthly manner. Make Christ thy companion, let thy affection dwell ever on both His life and death, and have thou joy in thy exercises through His presence and the remembrance thereof. In this first stage of thy contemplation, or first degree of love, thou mayest vary thy exercise after divers manners, even as Christ in His lifetime was followed and loved by many after divers

manners and with divers intentions. For the apostles followed Him, first of all, through their delight in His bodily presence alone, finding refreshment in His conversation and being attracted by the sweetness of His friendship. Even so do thou first of all after this manner follow Christ and abide in His company.

Consider how lovely was His presence, how beautiful and graceful His body, for He was lovely in His disposition above all the sons of men. Consider the sweetness of His words and gentleness of His teaching. Consider the manner wherein He conducted Himself in all things, with what sweetnes and benignity He pronounced the most mellifluous words. Consider how He conducted Himself inwardly, for He was meek, loving and kind. Consider both the maturity of His judgment, and the beauty of His presence. Contemplate in Him the depth of wisdom that was in His heart and likewise the joyousness of His speech; and no less the marvellous disposition of His customs in their inward composition. After this manner was He followed by the apostles.

Others followed Him that He might heal their diseases. Follow thou Him for a while after this manner, and throw thyself humbly at His feet, adoring Him and saying: *Domine, si vis, potes me mundare.* That is to say: « Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean ». Or say thou: *Jesu, fili David, miserere mei:* « Jesu, Son of David, have mercy upon me.»

Others followed Him for His miracles. And thou

also mayest contemplate His power in them. For He changes nature, varies the elements, casts out devils, heals all diseases. In these things mayest thou know that He is God, Who gave to nature in the beginning all its properties, yet ever demanded its obedience in all things that He might endue them at will with properties that were supernatural. After such manners as these mayest thou vary thy exercises and thy affection in this first stage of contemplation.

But thou must know that, although this exercise be of great advantage in spiritual things, — namely, to occupy oneself with the habits and example of Christ our Redeemer, — yet it suffices not to raise thee to love of Him, and of itself is of little profit. For what did it profit Judas, Pilate, Herod or the Pharisees, that they saw the death of Christ or His works or His bodily presence, since they desired not to imitate Him? Wherefore the end of this first stage of contemplation, according to Saint Bernard in his book on the Song of Songs, will be to thee that even as the apostles, drawn by this affection, left all the things of the world, riches, kinsfolk and all things else, even so must thou persevere in this degree of love until thy heart be wholly occupied with this sweetness and filled therewith, and weaned from all carnal love. After this manner, in short, must a man open his heart, in this exercise, to affection and love for the human nature of Christ, so that all his love and desire may be transported to the sweetness of Christ's

humanity. And this degree of contemplation pertains to beginners.

The second stage of contemplation according to the life and passion of Christ is somewhat higher. For a man who contemplates after this fashion does not draw near to the humanity of Christ only, but, as Saint Bernard says, is able to find God in Christ made man. He finds not God alone, nor man alone, but attains to a knowledge of Christ Who is God and Man jointly; and this Christ Who is God and Man jointly he loves and adores.

It is very fruitful in this exercise of contemplation upon the life and passion of the Lord if each time that thou readest or rememberest that Christ suffered this thing or that, thou form such an idea of Christ that He is represented to thee as God and man alike. So that, whatever thou readest or rememberest that Christ did, — whether the raising of the dead, the performing of miracles or the like — doubt not that it was done by Christ made man. Further, whatsoever thou readest that Christ suffered when His hands were pierced and His feet nailed to the cross, believe thou that it was God, without any doubt, that suffered this, and this by reason of the unity of His person, wherein deity and humanity met together without mingling of their natures. And this is the belief of every true Christian.

And the more clearly a devout man conceives this, the more will his affection find refreshment in

the life, passion and miracles of Christ. If thou thinkest upon Christ made man, there will come to thee from thy thoughts the sweetest affection and the greatest trust, because He is most mild, most benign, most noble and most sweet, altogether lovely, gracious and beautiful. Wherefore it will be the easier for thee to draw near to Him and adore Him, for the knowledge of Christ's Humanity is easier for us because it is the more strongly imprinted upon our minds, than the knowledge of His Deity which is far more remote from our own nature. If thou thinkest of Christ as God, all His works, deeds, actions and wonders will seem to thee to be the more greatly to be feared, and of the greater terror, affright and wonder. But if thou canst think upon both at once, — namely, the Deity and Humanity of Christ — then from thy conception and contemplation of Him there will be born within thee great devotion, love, trust, reverence and fear. This second degree of contemplation of the life of the Lord belongs to such as are making progress.

The third degree of contemplation is the raising of oneself by means of the Humanity of Christ to spiritual affection, looking upon God with the eyes of the spirit, as in a mirror and in figure; in this way a man comes, with the help of God, through the knowledge of His Humanity to the knowledge and love of His Deity. And through this regard of the spirit, and this union and transformation, a man begins after some manner to be made one spirit with

God, and to pass beyond himself, and to look upon this very truth, and be made ready for union and oneness with God. Wherefore Saint Augustine says, in the seventh book of his *Confessions:* When I was bidden to withdraw within myself, I entered my inmost being, and, with Thee as guide, I was enabled so to do because Thou didst become my helper. And I saw with the eye of my soul, as it were above this same eye of my soul, and above my spirit, the light of the unchangeable Lord: not this common light, which is visible to all flesh, nor anything after this manner, but something much greater: not as though it shone much more clearly, and filled all things with its greatness, but something which was not this but a thing very remote from it. He that knows the truth knows it; and he that knows it knows eternity; and love knows it. O eternal truth! O true love! O beloved eternity! Thou art my God, and for Thee do I sigh by day and by night.

This, then, is the last degree of contemplation in this pilgrimage which we make as we mount to the vision of the Essence of God. But let not the beast, -that is to say, the unclean man-touch this mountain or draw near to it; for if a beast touch the mount it shall be stoned. And this third degree of the contemplation of the life of the Lord belongs to those that are adepts, and are drawing nigh to perfection.

CHAPTER L

Of the figures, prophecies and Scriptures concerning the Incarnation of the Lord.

AROUND the work of our Redemption revolves the matter of all Divine Scriptures, and all things that are therein have reference thereto. For the Old Testament foretells it, and the New Testament shows it more clearly as having been accomplished. Consider, therefore, how many things in figures, acts, Divine responses and appearances to kings, prophets and priests preceded this work; and from these things understand its greatness, which requires thy thankfulness. Think then of thine ingratitude and lack of love concerning the desire of the patriarchs. Consider the desire of the fathers in times past and marvel at thine own lukewarmness, and at that of many others concerning this work of redemption.

CHAPTER LI

Of the Annunciation of the Lord.

WHEN the fulness of time was come for the fulfilment of the figures aforementioned, and when it pleased God to grant the desire of the Fathers, the archangel Saint Gabriel was sent to announce to the Virgin the Incarnation of the Lord.

Contemplate this and rejoice herein, that the desires of the Fathers were fulfilled, and the answers of God to them.

Consider the reverence shown by the angel to Our Lady, and marvel at the humility of God.

Contemplate also the exaltation of the Virgin, and her humility, virginity and other virtues; likewise her joy, exultation and glad devotion; and forget not how she visited Saint Elizabeth and all the things that came to pass on that occasion.

CHAPTER LII

A summary of the life of Christ for the exercise of those that have newly entered upon contemplation.

To the end that thou mayest gather up the whole life of the Lord into a brief summary, and have it ever with thee in thy memory, thou shalt make thy contemplation as follows.

Contemplate first thy God as a little child, wailing and weeping in the manger. Contemplate His poverty, consider His humility, with the coming of the angels and the vigils of the shepherds. Contemplate the colloquy of the angels and of the shepherds, and look at Joseph, beholding how he marvels.

Contemplate Our Lady kneeling with exceeding great joy, adoring her Son and rejoicing in her heart. Look upon the face and expression of the Blessed Child, yet think of the greatness and the wisdom that are within Him. Adore Him with great reverence and kiss the crib.

Think upon the circumcision of the eighth day, and the naming of the child Jesus; consider how He that was sinless took upon Him the cure for sin, that thou too mayest be circumcised of thy unruly and immoderate desires. He was called Jesus that thou mayest understand that those whose Saviour He is are His own and no strangers. Weep with the child,

who is wounded while yet so tender, shedding His blood for thee; and consider how while outwardly He weeps, He grieves likewise within for the state of man.

Think upon that resplendent star which leads the Wise Men to Christ; consider their great devotion and faith; follow them and offer with them to Christ in great devotion all that thou hast, — to wit, thy soul and thy body.

Think upon the lowliness and poverty wherein the Wise Men found Him, for the Lord would make no preparation for their coming. How the infant King led them from the East by the guidance of a star, and how they adored Him as God. See here three witnesses to the birth of Christ: the star, the Wise Men and the Jews, all of whom bore witness concerning Christ and the place of His birth.

Consider how when forty days are past Our Lady offers Christ in the Temple, and redeems Him as her first-born, offering the oblation of the poor. Think likewise of the procession of Our Lady and of the prophetess Anna, and of Simeon and Joseph. Go forth devoutly to meet them, and consider their conversation and the greatness of their devotion.

Contemplate likewise the humility of Christ and of the Virgin His Mother, who chose to keep the law although they were not bound so to do. Remember how Christ, while still a babe, is exiled by Herod: consider herein the patience of the Lord and learn to

suffer. Follow the pilgrims, listen to their converse together, and learn from their poverty and humility.

Consider how from the twelfth year of His age to the thirtieth the King of Glory is hidden in a village. He neither teaches nor works miracles; yet He teaches by His very silence, and, doing naught, yet does much. For He teaches thee not to presume to teach overquickly, but to humble thyself first and to be silent.

Consider how in His thirtieth year He is baptized by Saint John. Think of the reverence of Saint John, how he trembled at the touch of Christ; of the humility of the Lord in being subject to him, and how therein He fulfilled all righteousness, namely, perfect obedience. Note here the manner wherein the most holy Trinity was made manifest. The Father, in the voice; the Holy Spirit, in the figure of a dove; and the Son, in the flesh. And how the Father sent forth His Son to preach, saying: «Hear ye Him».

Consider how after this He went to the desert and fasted there for forty days and forty nights and was afterward tempted by Satan. Think upon His way of life in the desert aforesaid, and upon that which He did there, and the devoutness of His prayers, contemplation and weeping. Look upon His humility in the desert, when, as Saint Mark says, He was alone with the wild beasts. Reflect upon His marvellous patience: how He is led by the devil and suffers it; and with what wisdom He resists him,

giving the example of resistance likewise. Marvel at His dignity, and how the angels minister to Him.

Consider how, when He came down from the Mount, He chose fishermen and others that were despised of men for His disciples; and with them, by means of the sword of His preaching, He began to conquer the whole world. Ponder the life which He led together with the apostles, the sweetness of His converse with them, and the secret talks which He had with them both in the house and by the wayside; and how He was among them as one that serveth, eating with them at the same table and from the same dish, and in no wise privileged among them.

Consider how from thenceforward He is seen upon the earth, having His converse with men, going everywhere among them, sowing the seed of God's word, and doing many wonders, which could be done by none other save by God alone. For He gives sight to the blind, and hearing to the deaf; casts out devils, cleanses lepers, and heals all men. So many are the miracles which He did that the number of them could scarcely be written down. When any besought Him, He pardoned their sins; everywhere He preached, speaking in similitudes and parables, in one of which He called Himself a shepherd, and said that He had come to lead back the sheep that was lost.

Consider how often a great multitude followed Christ, — now four thousand, now seven thousand — into the desert. Follow thou Him likewise and be

thou near to Him, that thou mayest hear His words; look thou upon the face of the Lord and of His apostles, and listen to their converse together.

Remember thou that, when it was His will to offer Himself as a sacrifice, for the which cause He had come to earth, that He might show Himself to be the very Paschal Lamb, on the fifth day before the Passover the Lord of Heaven and earth seats Himself upon a she-ass brought by the disciples; and how the children of the Hebrews sing, with great triumph and voices of praise: «Blessed be He that cometh in the name of the Lord». Thus He entered the Holy City of Jerusalem. Know thou the humility of Christ the King, which is manifested as He sits upon the ass which is covered with the garments of the apostles. Where now are His royal household and array? See how He draws near to the city of Jerusalem and weeps for it, and grieves yet more for sinful souls, in the tenderness of His heart of mercy.

Now we have briefly set forth a summary of the life of the Lord, that thou mayest the more readily bear it in thy mind, for with naught else canst thou more healthfully and profitably occupy thy memory. Wherefore thou shouldst consider within thy heart, each day at some appointed hour, some portion of the narrative of the life or the death of Christ.

CHAPTER LIII

Wherein is contained another summary of the life of the Lord for the more practised and instructed. (1)

O Cross, Tree of Salvation, watered by the living fountain,
Adorned with flower refulgent, bringing forth most welcome fruit,
Jesus, King, Son of a King,
Jesus, born of God,
Jesus, promised to the fathers,
Jesus, foreshadowed by figures,
Jesus, begotten by the Holy Spirit,
Jesus, endowed with gifts,
Jesus, brought forth into the light,
Jesus, Sun given to the world,
Jesus, lowly Infant,
Jesus, suckled by Mary,
Jesus, tender Babe,
Jesus, wounded with the knife,
Jesus, made subject to the law,
Jesus, borne in the arms,
Jesus, shown to the kings,
Jesus, fleeing from the kingdom,
Jesus, full of virtues,
Jesus, baptized as a man,

(1) This chapter is in Latin, even in the Spanish version of the book.

Jesus, Companion of beasts,
Jesus, tempted by the enemy,
Jesus, true in word,
Jesus, enkindled with zeal,
Jesus, wondrous in miracle,
Jesus, transfigured,
Jesus, merciful in Thy affections,
Jesus, that sheddest tears,
Jesus, acknowledged king of all the world,
Jesus, borne upon an ass,
Jesus, Servant of Thy servants,
Jesus, hallowed in bread,
Jesus, betrayed to the Jews,
Jesus, prostrate in prayer,
Jesus, surrounded by the multitude,
Jesus, bound with chains,
Jesus, led before the judges,
Jesus, thrice denied,
Jesus, betrayed to Pilate,
Jesus, that then wert scourged,
Jesus, grievously mocked,
Jesus, given up to death,
Jesus, Bearer of Thy Cross,
Jesus, Comforter of those that wept,
Jesus, exposed to the multitude,
Jesus, stripped of Thy garments,
Jesus, nailed to the Cross,
Jesus, lifted up on high,
Jesus, a mockery to all men,

Jesus, crying with a loud voice,
Jesus, made notable by miracles,
Jesus, condemned to death,
Jesus, pierced most cruelly,
Jesus, reckoned with the lowest,
Jesus, bound with thieves,
Jesus, given gall to drink,
Jesus, crying out in agony,
Jesus, giving up the ghost,
Jesus, laid in the sepulchre,
Jesus, rising gloriously,
Jesus, striking fear into the soldiery,
Jesus, ascending into Heaven,
Jesus, Prince most high,
Jesus, Lord of all the world,
Jesus, Giver of the Spirit,
Jesus, our appointed Judge,
Jesus, Prince of Peace,
Jesus, Spouse most lovely,
Jesus, most righteous Judge,
Jesus, King long-expected,
Jesus, Ruler of all,
Jesus, the Desired,
Jesus, Alpha, our Beginning,
Jesus, Omega, our wished-for End,
Jesus, cleanse us from our stains,
Jesus, illumine our thoughts,
Jesus, make us perfect in virtues,
Jesus, breathe into us good desires,

Jesus, defend us from our enemies,
Jesus, be Thou our Leader,
Jesus, be Thyself to mortal men,
Jesus, our Life eternal,
O Cross, Tree of Salvation, watered by the living Fountain,
Adorned with flower refulgent, bringing forth most welcome Fruit,
Mary, received above the highest heavens,
Mary, adorned most variously,
Mary, illustrious in the heavens,
Mary, terrible to the devils as a camp in array of battle,
Mary, have care for us, that art our advocate,
O Mary, pious Mother, have care for us thy children.

Remember us, we beseech thee, as thou standest in the presence of God, and crave good things for us, who ever sing to thee: Hail, Mary.

CHAPTER LIV

Of the Supper of the Lord, and of the preparation meet for one who would receive His most sacred Body.

AMONG all the memorials of Christ our Redeemer, that which is most worthy of a signal place of honour is the last feast known as the Supper of the Lord. Wherefore, with heartfelt devotion, and above all at special seasons, thou wilt make thy meditations upon this lofty mystery.

Consider, first, how great was Christ's humility, when He ate at one table and from the same dish with those His lowly followers, and especially with the traitor Judas. Think upon the washing of their feet, when, desiring to impress the example of humility the more deeply upon their hearts, He prostrated Himself and humbly performed this office. Reflect on the greatness of His love and compassion in cheering His disciples with gentle speech and exhortation. But above everything, both daily, and most of all when thou art to receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Body, thou must recall to thy memory that most sacred mystery which herein was first instituted. For when, according to the custom of the Jews, He had eaten with His disciples the Paschal Lamb that was a type of Himself, He gave them to eat of Himself, the Paschal Lamb indeed, consecrating His most sacred

Body and giving it to His disciples, bestowing upon them also the desire to consecrate and give It to others.

O most wondrous magnificence! O unheard-of bounty! O love beyond compare! What can He deny us, Who has given us Himself? What more could He do, than this which He has done for us? All that He had, He gave. His own Kingdom He has given us — nay, He has given us Himself. Wherefore He said at this Supper: « As often as ye do these things, do them in remembrance of Me. » That is to say: in remembrance of those things that I did for you when I was yet in the flesh, for I was mocked for you, dishonoured and crucified.

Concerning this memorial of our Lord, Saint Jerome says: « He left us this memorial even as one that is going on a pilgrimage leaves some precious thing to those whom he loves, so that, as often as they see it, they remember his friendship and favours. Nor, if their love is perfect, can they look at it without the greatest sorrow or weeping. After this manner, the Saviour has given us this holy Sacrament, to the end that we may ever remember that He died for us. Let us remember, therefore, when we receive it from the priest, that it is the Body and the Blood of Christ, lest we become unthankful for so great benefits. »

This Sacrament, most excellent above all the rest, is, as Saint Bernard has it, medicine to the sick, sus-

tenance to the pilgrim, strength to the weakhearted, delight to the strong. Further, it heals infirmities, preserves men in health, makes them gentler under chastisement, more patient in their labours, more ardent in love, more prudent in counsel, more ready in obedience, more devout in the giving of thanks.

Moreover, this Sacrament keeps watch over the senses, and takes from us the desire to be consenting to mortal sin. Wherefore, if, after receiving this most glorious Sacrament, thou feelest less of the cruel motions of wrath, envy, lust and other such vices, give thanks to the Body and Blood of the Lord, because the virtue of the Sacrament is working within thee and rejoice because thy grievous wounds are giving place to health.

Yet consider that the effect of the Sacraments is wont to be according to the disposition and working of those that receive them, for Judas, although he received the Lord's Body, had no part nor lot in the aforementioned gifts. Wherefore, before receiving this most lofty Sacrament, thou must study, with great diligence, to prepare thyself worthily, in so far as thou mayest, for he that receives the Body and Blood of the Lord unworthily, receives them to his own damnation.

Three things are needful for the worthy reception of this most holy Sacrament, — to wit: bodily cleanliness, purity of conscience and present devotion.

Bodily cleanliness is sometimes merely fitting, but

at other times absolutely required. But purity of conscience, especially as regards the deadly sins, is essential. Wherefore, see that thou have contrition before receiving this Sacrament; and, if thou canst, pour forth thy tears in the presence of the Lord wherewith thou mayest cleanse thyself from the sins thou hast committed, whether in heart, in word or in deed. Concerning which Saint Gregory says in the book of the Dialogues: «It is necessary, when we celebrate these Divine mysteries, to offer ourselves up before God with contrition of heart, — that is, to destroy, not our bodies, but our sins. For we who celebrate the mysteries of the Passion of the Lord, must imitate that which we perform.» After this follows the confession of all the sins whereof thy conscience accuses thee, above all of thy notable sins, which thou must confess one and all; and concerning the sins whereof thou hast no knowledge, accuse thyself before the priest. In these two acts, namely of contrition and of confession, thou dost wash thy conscience of impurity.

The third condition, namely present devotion, will be worked in thee by fear and love. For fear awakens reverence, and love, desire and affection. Thou must have reverence, then, and fear, considering how terrible is this Table, whereto thou must draw near with true reverence and all seemly vigilance. For in very truth Christ is Himself present at this priestly table, and He that graced the board at that last sup-

per with the Apostles is He that hallows it. For it is no man that makes bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ, but that same Christ who for us men was crucified. The words are uttered by the mouth of the priest: the elements are hallowed by the virtue and grace of God.

How canst thou dare, then, to approach without fear to that Table, to the presence of Christ, and to touch the Son of God, whom Saint John Baptist trembled to touch, and Saint Peter, prince of the Apostles, besought to depart from him, saying: « Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord. » Before Him the powers tremble, and the dominions adore Him.

Consider, next, that He whom thou receivest will be thy Judge; and fear, therefore, that if thou receive Him unworthily and irreverently, thou wilt find Him incensed with thee after thy death, when thou art brought before his Majesty for judgment. Consider, moreover, that didst thou even prepare thyself for this Sacrament for thousands upon thousands of years with purity of prayer and devoutest meditation, it would avail thee naught for the worthy partaking thereof, even though thou hadst the merits of all the Saints. How much more so, when thou approachest it with lukewarmness of heart, and without either devotion or preparation!

Reflect, moreover, upon thy own vileness, after the manner aforementioned, and thou wilt reckon thyself unworthy, and wilt attain to fitting reverence.

And it is this, above all things, which avails for the worthy reception of the most holy Sacrament, — namely, that in so far as thou mayest thou hold thyself in thine own eyes as vile.

Further, thou must desire to receive this most reverend Sacrament. For, as Saint Augustine says, this Bread requires hunger in the inner man.

Different persons have different manners wherein they form their affections for the reception of this most holy Sacrament. Some are led thereto by their love of union with Christ, that they may oft-times embrace their Beloved inwardly. Others are drawn by the desire to be healed of their passions and evil longings, that they may bring, as it were, a Physician to their souls, Who may heal them of all their infirmities. Others are drawn by the consciousness of their faults, since this Sacrament has been instituted for the remission of sin. Others are drawn by love and compassion for their neighbours, that by means of this most holy Sacrifice they may help both the living and the dead.

And, that thy desire may be kindled, consider how Christ bore all the sorrows of those who came to Him, and how He took upon Him all our infirmities. For the unclean woman who followed Him was made whole. The woman that was a sinner, and kissed His feet, was cleansed. The Canaanite woman, who followed Him with importunity, was heard. The lepers who came to Him were healed. Those that

were possessed by devils, paralytics and other outcasts of nature, came to Him believingly and received their health. The virtue that went out from Him healed them all. Publicans and sinners approached Him and were pardoned, nor did He disdain their invitations to dine with them. Wherefore draw thou near with faith and trust, doing that which in thee lies and hoping for the infinite compassion of God. Moreover, before receiving this most holy Sacrament, thou must dwell devoutly upon the Passion of Christ, since we read that it was principally ordained in memory of His Passion.

It may be that thou enquirest wherein thou shouldst chiefly practise thyself — whether in fear and reverence, or in desire and love, — and if thou shouldst permit thyself a yearning desire, as do many, or rather shouldst consider thy unworthiness and the excellence of the Sacrament, and withdraw and separate thyself from it, by reason of the pricking of thy conscience and thy grievous fear. Holy men answer this question by praising both these feelings, leaving it to each man's conscience to do that which seems best to himself. For Zaccheus made haste to receive the Lord in his house with joy. While the Centurion, knowing his own unworthiness, withdrew from Him, saying: « Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter beneath my roof. » And both these were acceptable to the Lord.

One thing, however, is seen to be safe for all men

in common, — namely, that we cease not through reverence from hope and desire, nor through hope and confidence lose fear and reverence. But rather let us remain as it were between these two affections, having both confidence and fear, and thus be moved to receive the Holy Sacrament. For, as Saint Gregory says, there is naught safer than to live in hope and yet to fear. At the same time, speaking simply, we may say that the affection of love is better than that of fear; though that which in itself is better, may at times become worse, and, for many, more dangerous.

CHAPTER LV

That the devout contemplative must not cease from receiving the holy Sacrament by reason of certain scruples that at times awaken within him.

It sometimes comes to pass that to those that desire to receive the holy Sacrament of the Altar there come certain thoughts concerning their unworthiness, — namely, that they can in no wise become worthy to receive it — and in particular they think that they have not duly confessed their sins. This, according to Gerson, may well be attributable to the suggestion of the devil, who desires that they may be hindered from receiving so great a blessing. Such persons must realise that by their own strength they could never become worthy, even though they laboured for a hundred years, save if God were to grant them this great gift, which He can as well do now as at the end of the said hundred years.

A man in this state should consider further that in this life none can know with infallible and absolute certainty whether or no he is in grace, is truly penitent and has made a good confession, except it were specially revealed to him. And in truth if a man should refuse to receive the Eucharist without such certainty

he would be deceiving himself and would seem to be possessed by a kind of pride.

There is another kind of human or moral certainty which is requisite and sufficient for our purpose, — to wit, when a man, recollecting himself and examining his conscience, has done all that his discretion and the good counsel of others judge to be right, and has done it for a sufficient time according to common rule and custom. And if, after this, he considers himself not to be in mortal sin, he may safely approach the Holy Communion without peril of committing fresh deadly sin. And even though, as often happens, there come to him petty doubts, he must despise and conquer them, and act in the contrary way to that which they suggest to him, and constrain himself.

I call it a petty doubt when a man considers a thing to be good and right, and neither evil nor sin, although he have some reasons or considerations to the contrary which cause him some doubt, notwithstanding that his first conviction, that the thing is good and right, is much the more certain, so that if he had to decide the question for another, he would have neither doubt nor hesitation. If he is no more certain of one side of the question than of the other he must remain quietly as he is until he feels more drawn to one side, whether through consultation with others, by his own reasoning, or by Divine inspiration gained through prayer. If in this manner a

man has no certainty within himself he will always think he has made a bad confession, and will never have rest or attain to peace of conscience, which is in no wise a good spiritual condition. All these are the words of the doctor aforementioned in the treatise *De diversis tentationibus diaboli*.

CHAPTER LVI

That the Passion of the Lord has in itself all the perfection that is possible to a man in this life.

THOU must know that all the works of perfection which Christ our Redeemer taught in the holy Gospel He fulfilled most perfectly in His own Passion. So that in the Cross of the Lord is the end of the law and of all Holy Scripture, and in His Passion is the summit of all perfection, and in His death is the consummation of all His words.

Wherefore the apostle Saint Paul says: « I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified. » For indeed, brother, to know this is to know all things meet for our salvation. For if we speak of voluntary poverty, who was ever as poor as Christ, hanging naked on the Cross, and even there having nowhere to lay His head? If we speak of obedience and humility, who is he that has ever humbled and despised himself like the Son of God, Who became obedient unto death, even to the death of the Cross? If we consider virginal chastity, who more chaste than He whose mother is a virgin and whose father knows no woman? If we speak of charity, who had ever more charity than Christ, or as much as He? For in His Passion He laid down His life for His friends. Again, if we speak of patience, His Passion expounds it most ex-

cellently from beginning to end. If we speak of contempt of the world, and withdrawal from worldly things, Who is he that has ever withdrawn and separated himself from all earthly things as Christ did when He hung upon the Cross far above the earth and was lifted up on high above all things of the world? Or if we consider abstinence and fasting or lack of sustenance, Christ in His Passion tasted naught save gall and vinegar. If we speak of bodily chastisement, whose body was chastised like the body of the Lord upon the Cross? If of the efficacy of prayer, who is he that has ever prayed with greater efficacy than Christ, Who by reason of the great intensity of His prayer sweated drops of blood? If of bountifulness in almsgiving and the remaining works of mercy, Who ever gave greater alms than this same Lord, Who gave His own Body for our food, and His Blood for us to drink, — yea, to us poor mortals — as a perpetual alms. Likewise, He visited the sick, when He visited the faint hearts of the disciples, and healed many of their bodily diseases. The captives He redeemed from Limbo. The dead He raised from their sepulchres. And if we speak of loving one's enemies, did He not pray for those that crucified Him, even as He was hanging upon the Cross? If we speak of forgiving sins, who more liberally forgave his debtors their debts than did Christ, Who not only forgave the thief his sins, but even promised him Paradise?

And so of all other such things: we might go through the works of supererogation one by one, and if we sought them diligently in the Passion of Christ we should find them all abundantly performed. These works we likewise must perform, either in act or in desire, if we would be perfect in the imitation of Christ; and we must dwell upon them in thought and take them for our example. Do therefore that which is commanded by God in the book of Exodus, in these words: *Inspice et fac secundum exemplar quod tibi in monte monstratum est*. Which is to say: « See and do according to the example that has been shown thee in the mount. » And as Christ our Redeemer is continually called the mount in Holy Scripture, by reason of the loftiness of His most excellent perfection, so also above all He is so called from His having been lifted up on the Cross, in the exceeding loftiness of His most sacred Passion. Wherefore on this Mount, — that is to say, in Christ crucified — there is set before us an example that we may diligently consider it and effectively imitate it.

Contemplate, then, the example of the Lord's Passion with heartfelt pity and devotion, bearing it in thine own body and carrying it into thy life. And remember thou that, if we desired to relate all the things that Christ suffered in this world, their number would be infinite; and if all were set down the world itself could not contain the books that should be written, as Saint John says at the end of his

Gospel. Wherefore, since we cannot write down all that the Lord has done for us, let us strive to contemplate His holy Passion with great devotion and love.

CHAPTER LVII

Of six manners wherein the contemplative must consider and meditate upon the Lord.

CONCERNING the Passion of the Lord, the devout contemplative may exercise himself as follows. First, he may meditate thereon that he may imitate it; secondly, that he may be moved to compassion; thirdly, that he may be led to wonder; fourthly, that he may rejoice; fifthly, that he may make resolutions for the future: sixthly, that he may find rest.

With respect to the first point, which is the imitation of Christ's Passion, we may say that this is the loftiest and most perfect model for imitation, and the imitation thereof is the loftiest and most perfect way of life, and religion, and perfection in religion itself. The imitation of Christ in His passion and death is the noblest rule and model of life and virtue; wherefore it should be our rule of life, and the more nearly we conform therein to Christ the greater will be our consolation, just as the farther we depart from this rule and model the greater will be our sadness. As far as in us lies, we must ever desire to be trodden under foot by all men, shamed, despised, persecuted, mocked, beaten and scorned in the service of God. Let us be stripped of all things as He was strip-

ped, coveting naught soever. Let possessions be to us rather grievous suffering and intensest pain, and let us have perfect joy in naught. Let us shun the taste of sweet and delectable things, and desire rather to have our fill of things that are vilè and bitter, desiring that whatsoever food is given us should taste rather of gall than of honey, since Christ was given gall and vinegar to drink. To conclude briefly, let us meditate upon the things which He suffered for us, and how He bore Himself in His sufferings, and let us be conformed to Him in all things that we may.

In the second place, we must consider and meditate upon the passion of Christ that we may grieve together with Him, and be moved to compassion for His sorrows. The scourging and the pains which He bore; the affliction of His heart; the ingratitude of us men; the dolours of His Mother. We must consider His scourging, and the scorn and mockery heaped upon Him, dwelling upon these in our hearts and imagining how great were the scorn and the contempt, how great was the pain, and how great the affliction of soul and body, both by reason of His sufferings and of the compassion which He had for our sins. Let us consider next how great was the bitterness which filled our Lord, Who is the sweetness of the angels. O how sorely was He grieved, not only by the tortures inflicted upon Him, but by our ingratitude, and the affliction of the Mother who was present, who loved Him so much, and yet had

to behold Him fainting with grief and pain. The Son was crucified, and the Mother was crucified with Him, by reason of the exceeding greatness of the love that was between them; and for the compassion and mutual suffering of each for the other the affliction of both was very great. The mother knew that her son suffered for her, as well as for the rest of mankind whom He was to redeem. The Son knew most certainly that the sword of grief was piercing the soul of His Mother.

Consider, then, these things, and turn them over in thy heart, that the memory of this mockery and torment may cause it to swell with grief, when thou seest thy Lord and Spouse suffer such things for thee. For if in truth thou wert closely united to Him in love, then wouldst thou grieve for Him. And if thou feelest not the pain suffered by Christ, Who is thy Head, how art thou one with Him? And as we must have more compassion on the head than on the other members, so we should have incomparably more compassion upon Christ than upon any beloved friend or even son of our own, and even upon ourselves if we had to suffer all these things aforementioned.

Therefore, most beloved brother, let us become inebriated with the gall and vinegar and myrrh which they gave Him. Let us feel no wounds but such as were given to the Lord. Let the scorn and wounds and blows which were given to Him pierce the in-

nermost depths of our hearts. And let there be no part of us that melts not with the grief of compassion and is not deeply afflicted.

Thirdly, let us contemplate and meditate upon the passion of the Lord that we may marvel at it. For if we consider Who it is that suffered, what He suffered, for whom and at whose hands He suffered, we cannot but marvel greatly.

Who is He, then, that suffers? The Very Son of God, sovereign in power, wisdom and goodness, so that whatsoever be the nobility that thou attributest to Him it is as naught compared with the reality of His greatness. All things, howsoever great and good they be, are as a spark by comparison with thy Beloved.

What is it that He has suffered? Wanderings, exile, thirst and hunger, heat and cold, temptations, terrors, persecutions and snares of His enemies. Defilement with spittle, mockery, binding, blows and wounds, scorn and pain. They spit upon the King of Glory, the Lord of justice they condemn, the Judge is judged by them, the offenceless One is found guilty, the innocent One is defamed, God is blasphemed, Christ is trampled under foot, our Life is slain, our Sun is darkened, our Moon is clouded, the stars of Heaven are scattered. And all these things He bears as patiently as a lamb, though by a mere motion of His will He could hurl the whole creation into the depths of hell.

For whom does He suffer these things? Of a truth for most wicked servants, for most villainous enemies,—yea, for devil-like men, and for sons and followers of the devil. For such as have despised the Divine Majesty and received the Divine Goodness with ingratitude. Consider how He, that is such a One and so great, has suffered so many and so dreadful things for men so vile and so abject.

At whose hands has He suffered? At the hands of those whom He loved with an especial love, and chose to be His people, and to whom He showed all loving-kindness. The Most High has suffered at the hands of the very meanest; the All Wise, at the hands of fools; the Most Holy at the hands of the cruel; the Divine Brightness, from the foulest and blackest sinners. Let us, then, in considering all these points, soar aloft in wonder at the Divine loving kindness and bounty.

Fourthly, we must contemplate the passion of the Lord that we may rejoice therein. For we must rejoice at the redemption of mankind, the restoration of the angels and the Divine clemency.

We must rejoice greatly at the redemption of the human race, wrought by the passion and death of Christ. Who will not rejoice and be glad when he sees that he is freed by His most blessed passion from eternal damnation, from the ignominy of guilt and from the power of the devil? And who will not rejoice without measure, when he sees him-

self so greatly beloved of God that for his sake He has taken upon Himself such lowliness and suffering? I say not that we should rejoice at His humility, nor yet at the passion itself, but rather at its effects and at the manifestation therein of love.

What prince is there that, seeing that the sovereign in whose kingdom or empire he was dwelling loved him so greatly as to be ready to die for him, would not rejoice and exult thereat? And how much more must we rejoice and exult, wretched men, notable sinners and unprofitable servants that we are, when we see the King of kings and Lord of lords, — nay, our Creator — love us so constantly as to sacrifice Himself for us, dying a vile and shameful death? We must exult of a truth with boundless joy, for He loves us incomparably more than we love ourselves.

Furthermore, let us rejoice and be glad that through the passion of Christ the fallen angels were restored. This should be a great cause of joy to us when we see so noble a host gathered together again with ourselves through the death of Christ and becoming one fold under one Shepherd, we ourselves being one with them. Herein both the whole court of heaven and the Church militant must rejoice. O passion of the Saviour, that art worthy of all love and deepest reverence, thou makest things that have been severed to be one, unitest most firmly those that have been split asunder, and encirclest them for ever in the chain of blissful rejoicing and perfect love!

Above all, we must rejoice and be glad when in all these things aforementioned we behold the most lofty clemency of the Lord, Redeemer and Saviour, Jesus Christ. This I think to be the highest glory of the righteous, both of men and of angels, that they may contemplate most intimately and deeply the clemency and loving-kindness of God and the immensity of His goodness. And this must be the most inward delight of every contemplative.

And where does the outpouring of the Divine goodness appear most manifestly, and the clemency and loving-kindness of the most tender and loving Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, save in His passion, where He chose to suffer things so many and so great, so grievous and so shameful, that He might free and glorify His enemies, who had fallen by reason of a vanity which made them guilty of eternal death? Let man enter into this joy, and find refreshment in the immensity of the Divine loving-kindness. Let him draw nigh to this exalted Heart, and exalt in his own heart the most excellent and unspeakable clemency of Jesus Christ our crucified Redeemer.

Fifthly, we must consider the passion of Christ that we may rule our hearts, and be transformed perfectly in Him, which happens when a man not only imitates Him, grieves for Him, marvels at Him and joys in Him, but is wholly converted to our Lord Jesus Christ crucified, in such manner that for

ever and in every place he seems to see Him crucified. And after this a man becomes softened and melted in Him, is borne out of himself and set high above all things and above himself; so that he is wholly converted to his crucified Lord, and feels and sees naught within himself, save Christ crucified, despised, dishonoured and suffering.

Sixthly, we must contemplate Christ's passion for the sake of that rest which comes from inward sweetness. And this is found when a man who is softened and melted, as we have said, ceases not to think, with yearnings for Christ, upon His passion; and, entering as best he may into the treasure thereof, has consolation in it, humbly and piously, with devout love, and faints inwardly through the fervour of his devotion, and rests in Christ crucified. And the more closely he draws to Him the more he swoons away and melts through most holy love; and the more he swoons within himself through love and devotion, the more he is united with his Beloved Who died for him. And thus the union of love and devotion increase jointly, until the Bride is wholly absorbed by that burning fire of love in the passion of her Beloved; and she sleeps and takes her rest in the embraces of her Spouse, who calls and says: «I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till she please.»

Thou shalt contemplate, then, the passion of the

Lord, that thou mayest harvest therefrom these fruits of spiritual purgation and love. Compassion, for union and love. Wonder, for the lifting up of the spirit. Joy and exultation, for the enlargement of the heart. Resolution, for perfect confirmation. Repose and rest, for constancy in devotion.

Wherefore, that thou mayest the more readily meditate upon the Passion, we shall narrate it here, as we have it from the holy Gospel, dividing it into five parts.

CHAPTER LVIII

Of the Passion of the Lord, according to the Holy Gospel, divided into six parts. And first of all, before entering thereon, a brief system for the better contemplation thereof.

THOU must know that, in order to contemplate the better, and with the greater profit and devotion, the Passion of the Lord, thou shouldst consider it according to three ways or manners: namely, the fact thereof, the manner and the cause. And these three things should ever be kept in thy mind throughout the course of thy contemplation.

Consider first the fact of the passion: we mean thereby how that Christ was taken, bound, buffeted, scourged, etc. All these things thou must devoutly contemplate.

By the manner of the passion is meant the conduct of Christ, and His humility, especially before the judges: how He stood with bowed head, and eyes cast down to the ground, speaking meekly, humbly and with a voice that was wondrous gentle. Wert thou to hear any man speak thus thy delight would be very great, for His voice was as gentle even as His countenance was lovely.

Likewise there is the demeanour of His inward self, for it is clear that within Him was the greatest

humility, so that He had neither envy nor rancour against Pilate or the Jews, but rather had great compassion on them.

As to the third point, which is the cause of the passion, remember that thou thyself art the cause thereof. For He suffered in order to redeem thee, to illumine thee, to justify thee and to glorify thee.

Consider thou this His goodness as though He had suffered for thee alone. And as thou readest, thinkest and meditatest thereon, consider it as though Christ said to thee: «All this I did for thee, that thou mayest follow in My steps and humble thyself and be patient, and take up thy cross and follow Me».

In considering the fact of the passion, note thou the patience of the Lord; as to the manner thereof, His humility; as to the cause, His wondrous charity.

Furthermore thou shouldst not only contemplate these virtues, but imitate them in thy works, for this is that which thy Beloved chiefly desires. And note that in all this method of contemplation of the passion of the Lord, even as is set forth above, thou must ever think of Christ, not as a man alone, neither as God alone, but as One who is very God and very man.

THE PASSION OF THE LORD:
PART THE FIRST

After that solemn and royal supper was ended, Christ, Who was God and Man, arose, and with His

disciples set out to meet His death. Consider in what gentle words He spake with them of His passion, instructing and warning them, saying that when the shepherd was wounded, the sheep of the flock would be scattered. And likewise to Saint Peter: «Before the cock crow, thou shalt thrice deny me».

Taking these things in their literal sense, do thou before all things, with reverence and sweetness of devotion, contemplate the person of Christ, Who, as we have said, was at once both God and man. Give ear to that which He says, with all diligence, admiration and devoutness. Consider thou diligently, for thy own utility and profit, and instruction concerning thy own way of life, how gently He pronounced those words, how great was His lovingkindness, and how sweet the manner wherein He warned His disciples. Yet remember how great was His inward grief and sorrow concerning the death which was so near Him.

Consider furthermore this next point, that it is thy redemption that leads Him forth to death, and for thee that He is sacrificed: be thou moved thereby to devotion and to tears. These things and others like to them thou must consider as is meet, according to the three methods above mentioned, namely, the fact, the manner and the cause, — for we will not admonish thee as to each of these three at every step.

After this, when the Lord had left the other dis-

ciples, and taken His three chief followers with Him alone, He spake to them, saying: «My soul is sorrowful even unto death.» Then, leaving these also, He went to the Mount alone to pray. And here, after praying thrice, so great and so terrible were the fear and the terror which came to Him, that by reason thereof the sweat, like drops of blood, ran down to the ground, the which thing we read concerning no other man, howsoever great was his affliction.

Consider then how the angel came to strengthen Him. And how, rising immediately from His prayer, although He feared very greatly the torments which were to come to Him, He went out to meet His enemies, who, when He spake to them but a single word, fell to the ground.

Remember next how Judas kissed Him, and how the Lord suffered it with great patience. Behold how cruelly the Jews took Him, bound Him and carried Him away; and when all the disciples forsook Him and fled, how they led Him first to the house of Annas, where he was grievously struck on His most sacred face by a vile servant. Here make thy meditation, as we said above, considering Who is this that is treated with such irreverence and scorn. Subject thyself to Him, and let thy reason be consenting thereto. Think and believe that He is indeed the Son of God, the beginning of all things, the Saviour of men, the Rewarder of all. And let this be sufficient as to the first part.

PART THE SECOND

With respect to the second part, consider how the Lord was taken from the house of Annas to that of Caiaphas, where the scribes and priests awaited Him. Consider how harshly and perversely they bore Him there; how the Pharisees, full of envy, awaited Him; and how, when Caiaphas, the high priest, conjured Him, He spake the truth, and was struck with many and grievous blows, as though He had falsely usurped the name of prophet. Likewise how they covered His face, struck Him, spat upon Him and scoffed at Him, seeking false witnesses against Him, because they found no true ones. How He was denied by Saint Peter, who had considered himself more steadfast than the rest, and, when the Lord looked upon him, remembered his sin and wept bitterly.

Consider how, on the next morning, He was led through the streets to the judge, that he might condemn Him to death; and how Judas, when he saw that they demanded His condemnation to death, grieved so greatly at having sold his beloved Master that he hanged himself for his exceeding bitterness and sorrow, returning first of all the thirty pieces of silver for the which he had sold Him, wherewith was bought the field of Aceldama (that is, the field of blood) to bury strangers in, according to the words of the prophet Jeremiah.

Consider how, after this, the Lord was accused before Pilate, with a great uproar, and many false accusations, and in presence of a great multitude of the people. How the said Pilate sent Him to Herod, how He was led through the streets to Herod, how He was examined by him and answered never a word, so that He was mocked as a fool and sent back to Pilate.

Here it is meet that thou shouldst consider diligently Who is He that suffers in this way, grieve for the sufferings of One that was most innocent, most meek, most loving and most noble, and form thyself on His pattern.

Let this be sufficient as to the second part.

PART THE THIRD

As to the third part, thou shouldst consider how, when the Saviour was before Pilate, the Jews cried out upon Him with great tumult and uproar, saying: « Crucify Him, crucify Him! For we have a law, and by our law He ought to die ». After this Pilate caused Him to be scourged most cruelly in all His body, and to be mocked in many ways in the form of a king, as though He had proclaimed Himself to be such, unlawfully. With a vesture of purple they clothed Him, crowning Him with thorns, striking Him with a reed, and bending the knee as to a king in a mockery of adoration.

Consider thou diligently here the demeanour of the Lord in all these things, and how Pilate, as

though he were His lord and judge, said to Him: «Knowest thou not that I have the power to release Thee and the power to condemn Thee?» Consider the demeanour of the Jews, and the cause of all these sufferings of Christ, which were to redeem thee, and so forth, even as is said above.

After these things, the Jews came again to Pilate, crying out yet more clamorously, and saying: «If thou let this man go, thou wilt not be Caesar's friend. Crucify Him! Crucify Him!» Then Pilate, overcome by his fear of Caesar, gave sentence that He should be crucified, and thus they led Him out to be crucified between thieves, with the Cross on His back. Then He turned to the women who followed Him and said to them with great grief: «Weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children».

Consider here how great and how glorious is the King of Heaven and earth and all things, He Who in this fashion is mocked in the form of a king, and go thou out to meet Him, gazing upon Him with exceeding great wonder, and considering His boundless power, His beauty, blessedness and eternity, and likewise how His beauty is disfigured, how His blessedness is afflicted, and how He, the Eternal, dies. Marvel greatly that such majesty as His can be brought to nothing. And let this be sufficient for the third part.

PART THE FOURTH

Consider, in this fourth part, that Christ has been

brought to Mount Calvary, and the executioners have begun to dispose themselves to crucify Him and are stripping Him of His garments. Consider diligently the manner wherein they crucify Him, rearing the Cross first of all, then nailing His hands and His feet so cruelly to it, straining His joints as they do so. And in all this consider the patience of the Lord, and the gentleness of His demeanour.

Further, thou mayest meditate upon this crucifixion after another manner, beholding how the Cross is laid upon the ground and the hands and the feet of the Lord are stretched out and nailed to it, and after this it is raised on high.

See Him upon the Cross as He weeps and prays for the men that crucify Him; how He is blasphemed and mocked by those that are present, by the Pharisees and by the wicked thief. See how they set high above the Cross an inscription which is very true, namely: *Jesus Nazarenus Rex Judæorum,* that is to say, « Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews ». See how the Blessed Virgin, His glorious Mother, stands beneath the Cross full of sorrow, so that the more fervent was her love, the greater was her sorrow. See also how He commended her to Saint John.

After this consider the darkness which comes over all the world, and how the Saviour cries: *Eloi, Eloi, lamma sabacthani.* That is to say: « My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? » In these words He showed how great were His sufferings, and how in

some fashion His humanity was forsaken by His Deity. And this came to pass, because there was no overflowing of the superior powers of His soul, which were His to use, to the inferior powers, wherein He suffered.

Behold furthermore how He thirsted, and how they gave Him gall and vinegar to drink; and how, when all things were ended, He cried with a loud voice and gave up the ghost, showing that for so long as He willed He retained His strength within Him, and that none separated His soul from His body, save Himself alone, for He willed to separate it thus for our sakes. Wherefore the centurion, moved by this voice, cried: « Of a truth this was the Son of God ». Consider here the manner wherein Christ suffered, and study thou to imitate Him. For He suffered as a true lamb: most willingly, with respect to His neighbour; most cruelly, with respect to Himself; most obediently, with respect to the Father; and most prudently with respect to the adversary.

Strive then and accustom thyself that thou mayest by long custom suffer for Christ, wear the habit of His virtue according to the similitude of the imitation of Him; that is, of kindness, severity, humility, patience and all the other virtues. This concludes the fourth part.

PART THE FIFTH

In this fifth part consider how, when Our Redeem-

er has died on the Cross, there comes Longinus with other soldiers and they break the legs of the thieves. And when they came to Christ, and saw that He was dead already, they brake not His legs, fulfilling herein the prophecy which says: *Os non comminuetis ex eo.* That is, «A bone of Him shall not be broken». But the said Longinus cleft His side with a spear, whence flowed blood and water, and in this manner He consecrated the sacraments of the Church.

Then the veil of the Temple was rent in twain-namely, from the top even to the bottom. The sun was darkened and a darkness came upon the whole world. The earth trembled. The rocks brake. The sepulchres opened, so that on the day of the holy resurrection of the Lord the bodies of the saints which were there might rise with Him.

Consider here how many things the Lord suffered for thee, and embrace thou the Cross with desire to share His suffering. For even as the Lord suffered insults, mockeries, scoffings and tortures, even so thou, imitating the passion of Christ, must embrace all suffering for His sake,-yea, though it be full of insults, mockery, scoffing and torture likewise. Let this suffice for the fifth part.

PART THE SIXTH

Thou must observe that the passion of Christ not only feeds the memory through devout meditation, and enkindles the desire with devotion, but also greatly

illumines the understanding and brings it to a knowledge of the truth. For before the passion of Christ seven things were hidden in the knowledge of the universe, and these were then laid open; even as we read in the Apocalypse: «The seven seals are opened».

These seven hidden things are: The marvellousness of God, the reasonable soul of man, the world of sense, the Paradise of delight, the terrors of Hell, the excellence of virtue and the guilt of sin.

The first seal is the marvellousness of God, for in His passion He showed Himself to be sovereign wisdom, and therein led the devil astray very prudently, desiring not to overwhelm him with His infinite power. Likewise He showed Himself to be sovereign justice in seeking the price of our redemption. And likewise supreme mercy, for He gave up His Son for us.

The second seal is that of the reasonable soul of man, which likewise was made manifest by the passion, for the lovingkindness of the angels was shown therein, when they suffered Christ to be crucified. Likewise it was shown how great is the dignity of man, since for man Christ was crucified. And likewise the cruelty of the devils, who caused their Lord God to be crucified.

The third seal is that of the world of sense, which at the death of Christ was shown to be a place of darkness, wherein reigned blindness, for it knew not the true light. Barrenness likewise reigns

within it, for it knew not the fruitfulness of Christ. Iniquity likewise, for it condemned the Innocent One to death.

The fourth seal is Paradise, which was shown by the Cross to be a place full of glory, gladness and plenteousness, since Christ became lowly, poor and wretched that we might be restored thereto.

The fifth seal is that of Hell, a place most terrible, which by the death of Christ was shown to be full of poverty, wretchedness and want. For if Christ suffered all these things aforementioned to destroy sin, how much more must the damned undergo them, as a just retribution for their evil works.

The sixth seal is that of virtue, which is greatly to be praised, and which the Cross of Christ showed to be precious, beautiful and fruitful. Precious: because Christ preferred to lose the life of His body rather than run counter to virtue. Beautiful: because virtue shone forth even in the scorn which was meted out to Him. Fruitful: because one perfect act of virtue despoiled hell, opened the heavens and restored that which was lost.

The seventh seal was opened by the Cross, when the guilt of sin was made manifest thereby, and its hideousness was shown forth by the greatness of the price required for its remission, so great a remedy was it and so sharp a medicine.

And let this be sufficient for the sixth part of the passion of Christ.

CHAPTER LIX

Of the manner wherein the exercitant and contemplative should ever adore the memory of the Passion of the Lord in his meditations, that the fervour of his devotion may not be quenched.

INASMUCH as the fervour of devotion is created and preserved in man by the frequent memory of the passion of the Lord, according to the seraphic doctor, Saint Bonaventura, in his treatise entitled *De Perfectione Vitæ*, the exercitant must ever strive to keep Christ before the eyes of his heart, even Christ dying upon the Cross, that he may preserve his devotion and suffer it not to be quenched.

For this reason the Lord says in the Book of Exodus: *Ignis in altari meo numquam deficiet, quem nutriet sacerdos subiiciens ligna per singulos dies.* Which is to say: «The fire upon My altar shall ever burn, and it shall be preserved by the priest who shall put wood upon it daily». Thou must know that the altar of God is thy heart, whereon the fire of ardent devotion must ever be burning. And this thou must preserve and enkindle daily with the wood of the Cross of Christ, and with remembrance of His passion. And this is that which is spoken by the Prophet Isaiah: *Haurietis aquas in gaudio de fontibus Salvatoris.* As though he said: «Whosoever desires

the waters of grace, of devotion and of tears, let him draw them from the fountains of the Saviour,—that is, from the wounds of our Redeemer.

Approach thou, therefore, with the feet of thy afflictions, to Jesus bound, to Jesus crowned with thorns, to Jesus nailed to the wood of the Cross. And with the Apostle Saint Thomas, put not only thy hand to His side, but enter to His very heart, by the wound in His side which is the gateway thereto. And, once there, once crucified with most fervent love for thy Beloved, wholly transformed in Him, and nailed to the Cross with the nails of Divine love, pierced with the spear of heartfelt love and adoration, and wounded with inmost compassion, seek thou naught else, desire thou naught else, neither be thou consoled by any other thing soever, save in dying upon the Cross with Christ. So mayest thou cry with the apostle Saint Paul, and say: «I am nailed to the cross with Christ. I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me».

After this manner, therefore, must thou consider in thy memory the passion of Christ, and reflect how ignominious it was, how bitter, how protracted in its suffering, and how universal in its application.

Consider first how ignominious was the death of Jesus Christ, the Spouse of thy soul, Who was crucified like a thief or a robber. For under the old law none were punished by this kind of death, save the worst and basest thieves and robbers. Consider also

the second and greater dishonour which was done to Christ, when He was crucified in a place most vile and loathsome, — namely, on Mount Calvary, which was a place strewn with bodies and bones of the dead, being set apart for the execution of condemned criminals, so that the vilest of men were hanged and executed there. Consider likewise a greater dishonour yet, — namely, that Christ was crucified, like a thief, between two thieves, and in the midst of them as though He were their prince. As Isaiah said, He was numbered with the wicked.

Consider, furthermore, the shame which came to thy Beloved when He was set up on high, and hanged between heaven and earth as though He were unworthy either to live or to die upon the earth. O unworthy shame and insult! That the whole world should have been denied to the Lord of the world! And that naught in the whole world should have been held viler than its Lord!

So that the death of the Son of God was one of great dishonour, according to the kind thereof, since He was crucified and nailed to a cross. Likewise by the companions which He had in death, when He was numbered and condemned with the wicked. Likewise for the place of His death, when He was crucified upon the noisome Mount of Calvary. O good Jesus, O most loving Saviour, that not once alone but many times, wert put to shame! (And the more a man is put to shame, the more is he

despised by the world.) Thou art bound, O Lord, in the garden; buffeted in the house of Annas; spat upon in the house of Caiaphas; mocked in the palace of Herod; crucified on the Mount of Calvary, having borne the cross there upon Thy shoulders.

Alas, that the Redeemer of captives, the Glory of angels, the Life of men is dead! Yea, wretched Jews, well have ye fulfilled your promise; let us condemn Him to a most shameful death. He despised himself, says Saint Bernard, taking the form of a servant that He might enter into subjection; though He was a son, yet is He made a slave. Nor did He take only the form of a servant that He might enter into subjection; but also that of an evil servant that He might be wounded, and pay the penalty of guilt whereof He was innocent; and further still, not only did He become a servant of the servants of God, but likewise He became a servant of the servants of the devil. Nor was even this sufficient for Him, for He chose a death that was more shameful than any other, humbling Himself and becoming obedient even to the death of the Cross, which is the most dishonoured of all.

In the second place, thou must consider attentively and devoutly how bitter was the passion of Christ, for while His limbs were stretched upon that sacred Cross He would not permit them to receive any relief whatsoever nor any such things as are wont to relieve all anguished hearts. Nor had that

head, so reverend and divine, any place to rest in when He gave up the ghost on the cross.

Consider after another and more striking manner how bitter was the death of Christ. For the more delicate is a body, the more grievously it suffers, and since there was never a body so delicate that had suffered pain as did the body of the Saviour (for the flesh of Christ was wholly virginal, conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary) therefore His passion was so much the more bitter than the passion of any other. If Christ, at the thought of death alone, was so greatly afflicted in His blessed soul, by reason of the delicacy of His flesh, that the sweat of His most sacred body was as it were a sweat of blood pouring down to the ground, how much greater was the torture of His affliction when He tasted that most bitter death and passion! Upon this Saint Bernard says: «O most loving Jesus Christ, the anguish of Thy body is most clearly manifested by that sweat of blood which poured from Thy most holy body upon the ground at the time of Thy prayer. What hadst Thou done, O most gentle Son, that Thou wert treated so? What crime hadst Thou committed, most loving Youth, that Thou wert so harshly judged? Of a truth, Lord, I am the cause of Thy suffering. I am the wound that caused Thy death.

Next, brother, consider more diligently yet how bitter was the death of Christ Thy Beloved, for the greater is a person's innocency the heavier is his

punishment to bear. If Christ had suffered for His sins, His punishment might have been more tolerable. But He committed no sin, neither was any guile found in His mouth, and to this Pilate bare witness when he said, «I find in Him no cause of death at all». He is the splendour of eternal light, the spotless mirror of the majesty and goodness of God, and His very image, even as is written in the Book of Wisdom.

Consider more fully how full of torment was the death of thy Beloved, Jesus Christ, for the more universal is suffering, the more cruel is the torture which it brings. Christ thy Spouse suffered in such manner in all the parts of His body, that there was no member thereof, howsoever small, that bare not suffering; no part of His body, howsoever small, that was not full of bitterness. For from the sole of His foot even to the crown of His head there was no place that was whole in Him. Wherefore He cried, for the exceeding greatness of His agony, saying: O all ye that pass by this way, look on Me and behold My sorrow. Of a truth, Lord, there never was sorrow like unto Thy sorrow, for so exceeding great was it that all Thy body was covered with blood. O good Jesus, O gentlest Lord, not only were there drops of blood, but streams, which flowed freely both from the five wounds in Thy body at the crucifixion, from Thy head at the crowning thereof, from all Thy body at the scourging, from Thy heart in the

piercing of Thy side, so that it was no marvel if not a drop of blood was left in Thee. Tell me, I beseech Thee, my most loving Lord, if one single drop of Thy precious blood should suffice for the redemption of the whole world, wherefore didst Thou permit so much blood to be shed by Thy precious body? I know, Lord, I know of a truth that Thou didst this for no other reason than to show me how great was the affection wherewith Thou lovedst me. What, therefore, shall I give to my Lord in return for all that He has given to me? Assuredly, O Lord, for as long as I live, I will remember the trials that Thou sufferedst in preaching, the weariness of Thy journeys, Thy vigils spent in prayer, Thy tears of compassion, the sufferings which Thou didst bear, the insults, the spitting, the buffetings, the mockeries, the nails and the wounds. For else would the blood that Thou didst shed upon the ground be demanded of me. Who, then, will give water to my head, and fountains of tears to my eyes that I may weep by day and by night for the death of my Lord, Jesus Christ, which He suffered not for His sins but for mine? For He was wounded for our iniquities, and bruised for our sins, as says the Prophet Isaiah.

Consider furthermore and meditate diligently on the fact that the death and passion of Christ were long drawn out. For from the first day of His life on earth until the last day, when He died, He suffered pain and grief continually, even as the Prophet

witnesses, saying: «I am poor and in labour from my youth.» And elsewhere he says: «I was buffeted all the day long», that is to say, for the whole of my life.

Consider moreover after another manner how lengthy was the passion of thy Beloved, for the tortures which He suffered were of long duration, and the pain thereof was not quickly over, and His death likewise was prolonged, so that He was tormented for the longer time and the more grievously afflicted.

From all these things that I have said thou mayest know how shameful, how painful, how vile and how prolonged was the death and passion of thy Well-beloved Jesus Christ, Who suffered so many torments that He might kindle in thee His love, and that thou mightest love Him for all these things, with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. For what more loving act is there than that the Lord should take upon Him the form of a servant for the salvation of a servant? What is there that perfects a man in salvation more than the example of one who endured death for the sake of the justice and obedience of God? What is there that moves man to love God more than such lovingkindness, for the Son of God Most High laid down His life for us without any merit on our part, but rather despite our evil deserts? So great lovingkindness is this, that naught can be imagined more merciful, naught more loving, and naught more tender.

And this lovingkindness appears the greater for the many grievous and abject pains which God suffered, and willed to suffer, when He pardoned not His own Son, but offered Him for each and all of us. Has He not given us all things together with Him? For this cause we are called upon to love Him, and to pass from loving Him to following Him. Woe, then, to those who are unthankful for the benefits of so great lovingkindness, in whose souls the death of Christ has no effect. Wherefore Saint Bernard says: «See the head of Christ bowed down to kiss thee, His hands pierced to give thee of His bounty, His side opened for love of thee, His whole body stretched out upon the cross that He might give Himself to thee wholly».

Woe, again, to those who, crucifying Christ a second time in themselves by their sins, add pain to the pain of His wounds. And woe, in the third place, to those whose hearts cannot be softened to tears, nor provoked to good will nor enkindled to the virtue of good works by the shedding of so much blood: yea, the shedding of blood so precious and so great in its nobility! Such as these, of a truth, are enemies of the Cross of Christ, and crucify Christ the Son of God, Who to-day is seated at the right hand of God the Father in the heavens. They crucify Him, indeed, more truly than did the Jews in times past upon the Cross. To these, and of these, Saint Bernard speaks, and through him the Lord makes

complaint concerning them, saying: «O man, see what it is that I suffer for thee, if there is any pain like this whereby I am tormented. I cry to thee for whom I die: see with what pains I am tormented. Look upon the nails by which I am pierced. And great as is the pain which I bear both within and without, my complaint is the more grievous because of thine ingratitude. See that thou remain no more unthankful for so great a benefit, neither be undevout when so great a ransom has been paid for thee; but set Christ crucified as a seal upon thy heart, and as a seal stamps its photograph in soft wax, even so do thou stamp Him upon thy heart, and say with the Prophet: «My heart has become like melted wax». Set Him likewise as a seal upon thy arm, that thou never cease from working nor grow weary of toiling for the name of Jesus. And when thou hast laboured well in all things, begin afresh as though thou hadst done naught at all. And if ever a thing that is sorrowful or grievous or weary or bitter should befall thee, or any good thing should seem ill to thee, have thou recourse to Jesus hanging upon the Cross, and behold His crown of thorns, the iron nails that pierce Him and the lance-thrust in His side. Consider thou the wounds in His feet, in His hands and in His head, the wound in His side and the wounds in His whole body, remembering that He suffered thus for thee, and suffered in proportion to the greatness of His love for thee.

Upon this the aforementioned doctor Saint Bonaventura, writing to his sister, says: «Believe me, most beloved sister, that at that sight all that is sad to thee will become joyful, all that is grievous will become light, all that is wearisome will be pleasant, all that was hard will be sweet and easy; so that thou shalt say with holy Job: That which at first my soul refused to touch has now become my meat and drink through the anguish of the passion of Christ, and has become sweet and delectable to me».

Concerning this we read that one who had entered the religious life had become impatient by reason of the coarseness of the food and other disciplines of this life; and, while his impatience thus tormented him, he threw himself before the image of the Crucified, and there began, with many tears, to complain and lament concerning the insufferable trials and afflictions of the Order, and the lack of relish that he found in its meat and drink. When of a sudden from the side of the Crucified there began to flow blood, and the image spake to him, saying: «Whensoever thou findest thy food or thy drink to be coarse to the taste, do thou steep it in the blood which flows from My side». And ever after he was most patient and devout to the passion of the Lord, and ended his days in great holiness.

Here we bring to an end that which we say of the passion of the Lord.

CHAPTER LX

Of the Resurrection of our Redeemer Jesus Christ, of His glorious Ascension and of the mission of the Holy Spirit.

HAVING treated above of the life and passion of the Lord, we shall now treat briefly of the resurrection, the ascension, and the mission of the Holy Spirit.

Contemplate then first of all the descent of the Lord from the Cross, the laying of His body in the sepulchre, and the descent of His most holy soul to Hell, that is to the place where the holy Fathers dwelt, which is called Limbo. Think then of that which He did there, and the joy of the holy Fathers when they found themselves in such glory and in the presence of their Lord and their God. Think likewise upon the wrath of the demons, and the torments which they suffered in seeing themselves vanquished, and of the freeing of the holy souls. Consider how on the third day Christ arose, having vanquished death, showing us how we likewise shall rise again.

If, then, thou hast grieved with Christ for His passion, rejoice thou with Him now in His resurrection. Consider how, when He arose, the men that guarded the sepulchre fell like those that were

dead by reason of the greatness of their fear. Consider likewise the angels seated in the sepulchre, and the great multitude of angels who surrounded it. Think upon the visit to the sepulchre of Mary Magdalene and the other Marys, and how, when they found not the Lord, they returned to the sepulchre again and again, constrained by the greatness of their love.

Meditate upon the divers appearances of the Lord: first to Our Lady, then to the Magdalene, to the Marys and to the disciples: how great was the joy which came to all when they saw Him, how sweet was the talk and the conversation which they held together. Consider why Christ chose to appear in Galilee, for the word Galilee signifies a passing from one place to another—that is, from the vices to the virtues. And if we pass thus from vice, our souls and bodies alike will pass to the heavenly kingdom, where we shall see Christ after the general resurrection.

Remember likewise how, after the space of forty days, Our Lady and the apostles went out to the Mount of Olives, where Christ appeared to them with all the holy Fathers and a great multitude of angels, and, after strengthening and consoling Our Lady and the rest, He began slowly to ascend by His own power, together with all that company of patriarchs and angels. Reflect upon that great and wondrous procession, which was led by the angels, the patriarchs surrounding the Lord, and all the angelic spi-

rits descending from Heaven to receive them. After this wise, with unspeakable triumph, hymns and shouts of joy, they all went in together to that heavenly glory, wherein was made great solemnity and high festival, such as will never be made again even to the end of the world.

Think upon the sadness of the apostles, and upon the visits of the angels to console them. And learn thou also to rise with Christ by means of the ways and exercises aforementioned, stripping thyself first of all the vices, since no vice, even as Saint Augustine says, ascended with Christ.

Consider furthermore and remember in what manner Our Lady remained in the supper-room after the ascension of the Lord, together with His apostles and disciples: they remained, that is to say, in Mount Zion, where the Lord had eaten His supper with His apostles, and there, with fasting, prayer and spiritual exercises, they awaited the coming of the Holy Spirit, whom our Redeemer had promised to send them. When ten days had passed after His ascension, and Our Lady and the apostles and disciples were still together in prayer, on the Sunday, at the hour of terce, Our Lady was repeating that verse of the Prophet David: *Emitte spiritum tuum, et creabuntur, et renovabis faciem terræ.* Which is to say: Send Thy spirit, O Lord, and there shall be created in them the virtues, gifts and graces of Thy spirit, and through them thou shalt renew the face of the earth. Then

suddenly the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they were at once enlightened, strengthened and rooted in perfect charity. Consider how the Holy Spirit came in tongues of fire and with the sound of rushing wind. Consider the effects and the fruits of His coming: for though the disciples had been fearful of the Jews, and sat with closed doors before He came, they immediately lost their fear and went out to preach to the many people who had come together there by reason of the great noise which they had heard, so that Saint Peter converted forthwith some three thousand of them.

These things and many more concerning this great mystery mayest thou contemplate, the which we set not down in this place, to avoid prolixity; and with that which has already been said concerning the life and passion of the Lord, let this be sufficient for the matter of thy contemplation.

CHAPTER LXI

How stern perseverance is needful for devout men and contemplatives that they may come to the heights of contemplation.

He who thinks to possess the perfect fire of Divine love, or to attain to the height of contemplation, without stern perseverance, is like one ascending a high mountain, who, before making any progress in his ascent, turns back at the first difficulty or hindrance which he meets.

Such a man is likewise to be compared to one who tries to light a fire with green or rotten wood, and, seeing that no fire is kindled, or aught else save smoke, or some tiny flame which is instantly quenched, is moved with wrath and flings and scatters his work about on one side and on the other.

Likewise, such a man is to be compared to one who cannot wait patiently for the ripening of the wheat which he has sown, or for the tree that he has planted to take root in the ground, and this by reason of the length of time, the risks or the various obstacles which he realises have to be encountered.

Such a man is like to the monkey who desires to taste the green nut, but disliking the bitterness of the rind throws it away immediately, and therefore comes not to the sweetness of the kernel.

Finally, he is to be compared to a slothful knight who, before a city which he is besieging is completely taken, is himself overcome by his weariness of labour and goes away.

Seest thou not, then, brother, that a man that acts in this manner can never come to the height of contemplation, for he can neither kindle the fire, harvest the wheat, rear his tree, taste the kernel of his nut, or conquer the city, as in the examples aforementioned. In the same way, none can reach the perfection of contemplation without steadfast perseverance.

CHAPTER LXII

Of the many impediments which hinder the contemplative from attaining to the summit of contemplation.

LET us treat further of one of the examples aforementioned, and consider the actions of him that seeks to climb to the summit of some mountain. Such a man goes forward continuously, never turning back; and if he chances to rest, goes not down to the foot of the mountain, but starts once more to climb from the place where he took his rest.

In like manner, he that desires to attain to perfect contemplation must not halt or seek repose, for this is to withdraw oneself from contemplation, and to cease from going forward is to go backward. Nor must a man descend and start again from the foot of the mountain, but if he rest for a time, must continue from the place where he halted. For want of such perseverance, there are found but few who attain to perfect contemplation; for some, when they have mounted a little way, feel pain or weariness, stop to take their rest and turn back and descend to the foot of the mountain.

Others there are who keep no order or method in their ascent of the mountain of contemplation, for they wish to mount with one stride to its summit, instead of beginning at the foot and traversing its

whole length. And by the foot of this mount is meant the consideration of one's sins and shortcomings.

Others there are who have heavy burdens upon their shoulders, which they cast not from them, thinking to climb under their weight. Such burdens are occupation with worldly things, and thoughts fixed firmly and steadfastly upon them. These burdens weigh down the soul exceedingly, and force it downwards; and if it be able for a moment or more to rise they drag it down again immediately.

Others, again, are troubled by certain small flies which beset them in their path, so that by reason of this irritation they abandon their ascent, withdraw from it entirely and have no care to go farther. These flies are vain thoughts, whereby the soul must in no wise be impeded upon its path, but must go forward resolutely, beating them off with holy indignation, as though with a wave of the hand. Some, nevertheless, will even follow these flies like children who run after butterflies.

Others there are who are affrighted by the barking of the dogs of Hell: that is to say that, as soon as they feel any shameful temptation, they abandon their ascent, or else attack the temptation, striving to beat it off, which frequently they are unable to do. They would succeed the better if they took no heed of the temptation, like a pilgrim who hears the barking of dogs, but stays not on his way to

argue with them; rather he quickens his pace, as one that cares not for aught save his journey, which he continues, and the dogs cease from barking. If he stood still to defend himself against them or compel them to be quiet, they would but bark the more, and the end of his journey would be lost.

Others there are who never stretch out their right hand to Him Who can help them to rise; but they draw back their hand, and trust to the multitude of their riches or the greatness of their own strength. Wherefore it is no marvel if such as these fall quickly back again, for a man should ever hold out his hand to the help of Divine grace, mistrusting himself and his own power entirely, and presuming not by his own endeavours to reach the goal of his desires.

Others think themselves to be immediately upon the summit of the mountain, when in reality they have hardly begun to climb, and, on that account, dissemble and cease from their ascent, and so find themselves once more at the foot of the mountain.

Others reach the summit of the mountain, but at once become vainglorious or full of joy at having ended their journey so well, and borne so well the trials of the ascent; and so they give no diligence as to what they must do to remain upon the summit which they have attained. These are quickly pulled down or fall back immediately, and mount not again as quickly as they would wish. Or it may be that God will never help them again to reach the

point whereto they have attained already, and this by reason of their pride or ingratitude and failure to use the knowledge which He has given them. And this is a thing to be greatly feared, for the which reason a man must never presume concerning himself, but hold himself ever in deep humility. That is to say, when he sees one who has been very near to God and has enjoyed familiar converse with Him, he, like a tiny bird that has built its nest in the heavens, is cast down again to hell, without possibility of return or recall.

Others there are who, seeing themselves a little more advanced in their ascent than their companions in contemplation, despise and even mock at those who are lower than themselves. And these are rightly abandoned by God and allowed to fall, that by their fall they may know how little they can do of themselves.

Others strive to ascend this mountain for no other reason than that of curiosity, and the desire to say: «We too have been there»; or to seek out most excellent and secret things, or to have pleasure and delight, or to see the beauty of this lofty region, instead of desiring to please God, and serve Him more nearly, more honestly, and more worthily. Such as these very quickly lose the help of God and His grace, or find themselves most sadly, shamefully and miserably deceived, believing themselves to be on the Mount of God when in reality they are on the mount of the devil.

Finally, there are those who progress more quickly than is right and proper, desiring to outstrip their guide, and to mount more speedily than He wills, which is great folly. For the contemplative must be guided by the grace of God, and not travel at his own pace, as we have said. Wherefore he that cannot, or desires not, to bide such time as is needful that he may go forward by the impulse of the grace and help of God, loses such grace, and will not find it again as quickly as he would desire.

On the other hand, there are those who are never ready to receive this grace of God, and, even when they are called and moved of God to make the ascent, reject the call, and turn to other occupations, or tell the grace of God, either in so many words or by their deeds, to wait for them yet a little, wherefore being driven away, it vanishes. For this reason we must ever keep guard over our heart, that we may welcome the visitation of Divine grace, and proceed and go according to its impulse and its will, neither more quickly nor more slowly, but ever with profound humility, judging ourselves unworthy even to ascend this mount, much more so to climb to its summit. After this manner he who humbles himself the more deeply will the more quickly be lifted up, even as a powerful king, who desires to honour a knight, sets him on high, and seats him with princes the more willingly, when he refuses such honour, and compels and forces him thereto the more because

he humbles and excuses himself. For presumption is displeasing to God above all things, nor is He pleased with the manner of those who seek to approach Him without restraint or fear. A man should ever be shamefast, which is a virtue most holy and worthy to be praised, and he should tremble, fear and be awed, placing his trust only in the loving-kindness of God. Without such trust his fear would be exceeding blameworthy, and a hindrance to the ascent of our mount of contemplation, because such fear and tribulation are greater than reason requires.

CHAPTER LXIII

Of certain other hindrances to contemplation.

Let us speak further of certain other obstacles or hindrances to this holy contemplation aforementioned. There are some who beat their ass, — that is their own body — very sorely, so that the soul has no help therefrom. Others are over-full and heavy, infirm, sleepy or slothful because they have been for too long in the infirmary, — that is, in the sickness — of a carnal life, have eaten or drunk overmuch or have given themselves to the custom of vain words. Such as these are like men that are crippled, paralysed and altogether weak, and sleep by reason of their infirmity. These need sorely to be cured, and they must begin from the lowest point, that is their humble penitence.

Others there are who as they ascend this mount suffer from time to time from a great spiritual hunger for the word of God, and, after this, desire to read or hear other things, wherefore it comes to pass that they tarry long at their reading, and take more refreshment therein, and that more immoderately, than time or reason requires: so that, forgetful of the beginning of their ascent, they continue it not as they began it. It is true that such refreshment as they desire is oft-times profitable and necessary, above

all at the beginning of their ascent and when it is taken in moderation. A man must ever be mindful of his ascent, — that is to say, when he reads he must seek devotion in his reading rather than knowledge.

Others, again, are stubborn and kick against the pricks of conscience which spur them on to ascend the mount of contemplation, for they are unwilling to endure its weariness and tribulations.

Similarly, there are others who are insufficiently instructed in the seeking of the way, yet who will not ask it of those who know it well or take their counsel; but abounding in their own wisdom, they trust in themselves, and desire to be their own instructors on this matter. Wherefore they oft-times stray and fail shamefully in their ascent.

Others there are who cease not to ask and seek this way by fervent study, so that they know how to speak and read thereof from the pulpit and to teach others, yet have they never walked in this way themselves. They can speak of it because they have heard of it from others, but will never strive themselves to walk in it. Wherefore it is no marvel if such as these remain ever at the foot af the mount, for by words alone no man can ascend it, — it is needful that he climb with his feet. Such talkers are like those who admonish others in battles and teach them to fight bravely, but themselves mix not with warfare. Or they are like such as show pilgrims their way that they may receive alms from them, but walk not

therein themselves, whether from infirmity or from impotence. Others again, when they have started to travel by one road, leave it and turn aside into another; and this either from inconstancy, or because they think to find an easier or more delectable journey, so that they neither know nor understand anything. For they are like hounds who follow stags, and can never overtake them if they run first after one and then after another; they must follow the tracks of the first they find if they are to take it, and turn aside to no other thing, as indeed is the way of all hounds who are fitly trained.

Others are heedless of themselves, and look not at themselves at all, but, despite the perils of their way, set down their feet thoughtlessly, without caution or consideration, wherefore they fall quickly from the top of the mount to the bottom.

Others, as they climb, look behind them or beneath them, and, if anyone calls them from below, they abandon their ascent altogether; and these lose more of their fitness the longer they remain below, and can only climb further with the greatest difficulty and trouble, because to those who seek things of the spirit or who exercise themselves therein worldly conversation is no small let and hindrance. And he that fixes his heart on such things, and devotes himself to them, and withdraws not suddenly from them that he may follow his upward path, this man by his own folly is greatly hindered in his

ascent. Wherefore we must not tarry upon such things, and must consider them only from necessity; and if our body has need to be here below, our heart must be on high. This thing is very difficult for those who have not learnt it, because the anchor of their hearts is not fixed in the mountain, nor have they the cords of good habits wherewith to bind themselves to it.

Others there are who, as they mount, never consider that they will have to leave the summit; but think that they will remain upon the mount as though it were theirs by right and by inheritance. These soon fall back, and learn their weakness, and experience tribulation, whereat they realise that it was the grace of God that set them there and kept them for so long as it pleased Him. Then, when they begin once more to ascend, they learn to think humbly lest they should fall; and when they are on the lower slopes of the mountain, they hope to ascend once more if they keep a good heart and are patient. For it is fitting, and more so in bodily adversity than in spiritual, — that is, in the severe temptations and afflictions of the spirit, — to keep oneself without corruption when a man has no consolation, that he may not be impeded in his ascent of the mount of contemplation.

Finally, there are some who find the cost of their ascent very great, — that is to say, its tears and afflictions, — and these cease to perform works which

are needful. With such the merciful Lord deals graciously, permitting them from time to time to fall to a lower level, that they may do things which are needful and not forget them.

These hindrances aforementioned, and numerous others like to them, to the which they may be reduced, impede the ascent of the mount of contemplation; and to conquer and avoid them steadfast perseverance is needful, together with the degrees aforementioned, — namely humble patience, a place of secrecy, and silence.

CHAPTER LXIV

How some persons fail in steadfast perseverance, and therefore profit little in contemplation.

THERE are many who have not been well counselled concerning steadfastness in perseverance and the fruit of contemplation, and who for that reason are very far from attaining to the higher states which we have mentioned; for they refuse to give themselves to prayer and meditation, save when they feel drawn thereto by devotion, or have delight therein, and therefore they become like others who profit nothing. Such as these are like men starved with cold who yet refuse to approach the fire until they are already warm. Or they are like one who is dying of hunger and will not set about eating till he be satisfied. Tell me, brother, I pray thee, wherefore does a man give himself to prayer or meditation, save to be warmed at the fire of Divine love or to be filled with the gifts and grace of God? Such as we have spoken of fail and go astray in this, when they think that by practising prayer and meditation they are losing their time, if they are not immediately sprinkled with the dew of devotion.

On this matter Gerson says that if such as these strive hard after devotion, and do that which in them lies, waging continual warfare and battle against their

own thoughts, and being grieved because these leave them not and they cannot find peace, they have greater merit than if devotion came to them suddenly from time to time without any effort. The reason of this, according to the said doctor in his *Mount of Contemplation,* is because they engage in a Divine knight-errantry, and serve God at their own expense and cost, and with greater pain and labour. Such contemplatives as these should of course have reasonable space of time, and withdraw themselves from all other occupations, striving in their exercises to remain for a long time in the same place, — that is for the space of two or three hours, — whether they find consolation therein or no, and striving continuously during this space of time to attain devotion. And if a man find himself wearied or fatigued at the end of an hour or more, let him say to himself that he will stay yet half an hour longer, that he may do penitence, and await the alms of God's grace. By admonishing himself in this manner, he will be calm in his exercises, until the said time has elapsed, and often in the latter part of the hour he will gain much more in his exercise of contemplation than he has gained up to that time, — yea, even in ten days or a month. And if when this space of time is over he finds himself as it were rejected by God in such manner that he has received no such alms, — that is, he has not received the grace of devotion, — he must turn humbly to God, confessing

himself to be unworthy of such grace, and to deserve blows and tribulations rather than consolation and devotion.

Let him say as follows: « O Lord God, be ever Thine all consolations, praise and glory. And as for me, a sinner, be mine confusion and shame, as is meet and right, save if the contrary comes to me from Thy mercy. »

In this manner he will prevail with God, sacrificing to Him the hardness of his heart, and of a truth God will not forget him, but will make him a partaker of His mercy, at the hour and moment which seems best to Him and most pleases Him. Nor must any man, with tears and devotion, seek these consolations for his own delight and pleasure, but rather that he may be joined with God in most ardent love, turning to Him more truly and with greater joy; and if God be better pleased that a man should serve Him for a time without these consolations, he himself must likewise be content thereat, and be conformed to His holy will, saying: « O Lord God Almighty, I am well content that my reward and prize shall be laid up for me by Thee in Paradise, and that I have it not now. Yet one thing, Lord, I crave of Thee, — that Thou be not wroth with me, but that I may live in Thy grace, and that henceforth Thy holy will may be done.»

And if by chance a man attain the grace of devotion or consolation, let him be diligent in giving

thanks to God with all his heart, assigning all merit to His goodness, and beseeching Him instantly, that He will be pleased to establish and increase the work which He has begun in him, giving him not here his prize, but reserving it for him in Heaven.

CHAPTER LXV

Of the manner wherein the contemplative must have knowledge of God.

The contemplative must be content to know God when he comes to the glory of Heaven on high. With respect to this present life, it must suffice him to believe and know that He is his Creator, Maker, Redeemer, Governor and Rewarder, and so of the other dignities, wherein we are instructed in the Catholic faith: he must not desire to know what God is in His nature, through direct vision.

Concerning this the contemplative must take note that, according to the teaching of Saint Dionysius, whensoever he contemplates God or meditates upon Him and thinks he has seen some thing, which, in whatever manner, seems like to something in this world, let him be certain that he has had no direct vision of God, nor yet of the angels. For God has no bodily magnitude, nor colour, nor whiteness, nor brightness, nor any such thing; and neither have the angels such qualities.

It is true that God may be known and perceived after another mode or manner, which can be described neither by word nor by writing, and only those who know it for themselves know what this is, even as when one feels sweetness or fulness or taste or me-

lody, — feelings which can be explained in no manner at all. For as at certain times we feel within us love or joy which we possess, and cannot say that such things are small or white or black or of any other colour, since being not bodily objects they have no bodily qualities, even so a man cannot explain to another what are these feelings of God, unless that other has himself felt them.

Yet I say not that no conception can be formed of what God is with respect to His humanity, for we can well imagine this, since He took our humanity and our very nature upon Him. What we say here of God is to be understood with respect to His Divine Essence.

And if the devout soul were well accustomed to dwell in the height of contemplation, and returned there continually through steadfast meditation and thought, rising easily above itself, it would find contemplations of great beauty without number; and then contemplation would be to it as a haven and refuge against all the tribulations and hindrances which it finds in the great ocean of this present world.

CHAPTER LXVI

How God dwells in the soul by grace, and this after three manners.

We have spoken hitherto only of the matter of contemplation, leaving aside many other manners thereof, which are far more subtle, for those that are well instructed and learned, wherefore we have no care to speak further of this subject. We shall end, then, by setting forth the three manners wherein God dwells in the soul by grace.

The first is by working our justification, whereof the soul has no feeling, — but this manner is none the less acceptable to God because it feels it not.

The second manner is by some kind of feeling and consolation, as comes to pass with those who in their contemplation receive and feel divers modes of consolation and spiritual joy, for at times it seems to them that they are wholly melted in sweetness, so that all that they see or think they judge to be full of such sweetness. At other times they receive a marvellous sense of security, yet accompanied by great humility, by means of which they hold themselves to be vile, experiencing delight and pleasure in naught save in the things of God. For whensoever a man is pleasing to himself and has joy in himself, let him be certain that he is far from true humility, and that

the consolations wherein he rejoices are not of God neither are born of Him. True humility is ever accompanied by good and Divine visitations, and gives a man to know his own lowliness and shortcomings, whereby he becomes vile and abominable to himself, to his own heart and to his understanding, knowing himself better than he can be known by the whole world. And he judges that God is so excellent and of such infinite majesty that all things else appear to him to be naught at all, save in so far as he finds God in them. At other times the soul feels within itself a spiritual inebriation which moves it to praise God soberly with spiritual praises, and devout and holy sighs, being unable to contain itself inwardly and not to give outward signs of its feelings. At times all things seem to it to be full of glory and praise, and to give glory to God.

The third manner is by union, even such as was granted to the apostle Saint Paul and other most excellent contemplatives: to speak of this I hold myself unworthy, leaving such things to the greatest doctors. Let that which has been said above suffice for our simplicity.

CHAPTER LXVII

That all men, — and especially religious, — are bound to strive to attain perfection, under pain of present and future harm.

MANY are wont to speak in this fashion: «The ordinary way of life is sufficient for me, and I am well content to be saved with the lowest. I desire not the merits of the apostles, nor to soar after lofty things, but I will rather walk upon the plain below.»

Upon this matter Gerson writes in his *Mystical Theology,* saying concerning such as these that not to wish to be perfect is itself imperfection, for not to go forward in the path of God is to turn backward. Further, according to the holy Gospel, such a man is condemned already, like the slothful servant who was content to keep the talent committed to him without putting it to usury.

Let us explain this by a homely example. A certain man who is noble and powerful, and the father of a family, has many children, any one of whom is well able by his industry to increase the family welfare in honest fashion. And one of these, while the others work well, sits at home in sloth and idleness, having care for nothing, though in no wise living immorally. He gives no thought to anything which is noble, lofty or worthy, either of his own talents

or of his father's nobility; for he says that he is satisfied with what he has and is content to live any kind of life. His father exhorts him to lofty and arduous deeds, admonishing and encouraging him frequently. If this son neither hears nor obeys him, it is clear that he will be displeasing to his father. In the same way we may speak of our heavenly Father, Who calls us to higher graces and actions ever more divine, while we are slothful and care only for things that are low, and strive not after perfection.

This example applies only to such as are bound by no particular state or office, and who transgress no commandment by striving after loftier things. Such as are thus bound, by obedience to the Divine commandments, may be well content therewith, and may even consider their state to be a very lofty one, even though they strive not after the perfection of contemplation.

Further, we must reflect that although Mary could have ministered with great honour to our Redeemer as Martha did, yet nevertheless He praised her for being intent upon one thing, and choosing therein the better part. Wherefore a man is accursed if he choose the worser part when he might choose the better.

By these things aforementioned it is clearly shown that the contemplative life, even as theologians teach, is more perfect than the active; and anyone that is fitted for contemplation and in no way tied by the necessity of obedience, may lawfully give himself thereto, leaving the obligations of an active life. On this

matter Saint Augustine says: *Otium sanctum quaerit caritas, negotium sollicitudinis suscipit necessitas caritatis, quam sarcinam si nullus imponit, contemplationi vacandum est.* Wherein he shows that, if the business and work of charity impose no other duty upon us, — that is, through the command of a superior or evident necessity,—we should engage in contemplation. Let none urge against this that he would make progress in the active life very rapidly, and assert that he will be condemned if he hides the talent wherewith he might trade, by preaching or ministering to the poor. For the contemplative is of most abundant profit to the Church when he serves God with his heart and understanding, while others serve Him with their hands, lips or feet. Wherefore there are many who are to be adjudged as meriting admonition for failing to strive in contemplation, even as those who are placed in the school of religion, which is the school of devotion and prayer, compunction and weeping. In this state likewise should ecclesiastics be, who in their leisure possess the fruits of their people's labours that they may keep the justifications of the Lord and seek His law. Likewise many other men and women who live in the world and have sufficient leisure, time, knowledge and talent to devote themselves wholly to God. Let them but have faith, hope and charity, for there is no other greater instruction for them to seek, by engaging in profound study, that they may devote all their affection to God.

CHAPTER LXVIII

How in certain cases the contemplative should descend from his contemplation, and postpone for a time his spiritual exercises.

AFTER two manners the contemplative must from time to time postpone his exercises, and descend from the mount of contemplation: namely, for his own sake and for his neighbour's. And concerning each of these two parts there are to be made three divisions.

First, with respect to himself, it may come to pass that a man who is established in a lofty degree of prayer descends that he may exercise himself more perfectly in some lower degree, lest by negligence while climbing upwards he might lose that to which he had attained in the lower degrees of prayer. For in these exercises aforementioned it is not always fitting to mount upwards, to such an extent as not to think on that which is below. But rather it is well to mount and progress from virtue to virtue, without forgetting the exercises already mastered, by which one has mounted to others that are higher: rather one should study diligently to keep them. Let us take as an example the meditations upon sin, the fear and meditation of death, judgment and the pains of Hell, by which thou didst attain compunction, and

many other good things, while thou wert yet in the Purgative Way. From these considerations thou camest to hope, by remembering the benefits of God in the Illuminative Way, and afterward to union with God through love in the Unitive Way. Tell me, then, brother, hast thou to cease from fear, and to leave off entirely thy meditations upon death and judgment, because thou hast risen to have union with God? In no way hast thou to do this. Rather from time to time thou must descend to the studious contemplation of the vanity of the world, the shortness of thy life and the cruelty of the pains of Hell, that by means of this descent thou mayest have fear, and by means of such fear thou mayest be drawn upward to heavenly things, and be impelled as by a spur to mount further yet. In this manner thou must ever mount in thy spiritual exercises by means of hope and charity, to the end that thou mayest descend to fear till charity be perfect in thee, and thou cast forth fear entirely; and lest by chance thou fall into presumption or over-confidence or become slothful. After this manner holy men mount even to Heaven by affection and desire, and yet descend to Hell through diligent consideration.

The second manner wherein thou must descend is by the composure and due ordering of the outer man, to the end that devotion and inward sanctity may shine brightly in thy outward habits and gestures. Wherefore thou must govern thy outward habits, and

keep thyself so that thou art ever an example to others and beloved by all men. This precept we shall very well fulfil if we study to observe three things in our outward behaviour. First, let our behaviour be prudent. Secondly, let it be humble. Thirdly, let it be kind. For prudence makes us examples to others, humility preserves us and kindness makes us to be beloved by all.

Thirdly, we must oft-times descend from the mount to do some bodily or manual work; for we must so order our exercises that daily, at certain times, we practise manual labour, and at other times make progress in spiritual exercises; though even when we are working with our hands we can give ourselves to such exercises of prayer and meditation, of desire and holy fear. This we find in the rule of our holy Fathers, for, the more they busied themselves with manual labour, the greater were their hopes of attaining to the loftiest degree of purity and love. Since we are weak men, let us not think ourselves to be angels, but feed ever upon spiritual food whereof we know not. Let us not desire to be at all times engaged in spiritual things, but let us practise manual labour from time to time, and this for many reasons.

The first reason is lest we be conquered by weariness or repugnance for spiritual exercises, and give them up altogether. Nor must we think ourselves to be more fervent or spiritually minded than was

the great Anthony, who, if he had not been warned by an angel against devoting himself wholly to spiritual exercises, would have been overcome by weariness for them and would have returned to the world. For this reason, says Cassian, he who is not content to do some manual labour daily cannot persevere to the end in his cell.

The second reason is that although such manual labour withdraws us for a time from contemplation, we return to it afterward with greater effort and devotion. For we cannot ascend the mount if we are given to lusts of the flesh, which hinder us in our journey; wherefore we must conquer them, and this we can best do by manual labour, for he that is idle has always carnal desires. Wherefore work of the hands is oft-times of real service to spiritual exercises, by doing away with hindrances which we find in our ascent to contemplation.

The third reason is that our heart is very unstable, and, like a little ship, is tossed hither and thither by the billows, in busying itself with divers affections and meditations. Wherefore, as the aforesaid Cassian writes, we must keep our heart fixed by the anchor of some manual occupation or labour.

The fourth reason is that the enemy finds many more gates open to him when we are idle than when we are busy; for if a man that is busy is tempted by one devil, an idle man is tempted by devils innumerable, and his soul is destroyed. For these reasons,

and for many more which I set aside to avoid prolixity, the holy Fathers, and especially those of Egypt, laboured very faithfully, for which cause they are most highly praised by the saints.

And that we may never be far from spiritual exercises, we must ever choose out those kinds of bodily labour which are most allied to things of the spirit, such as the writing of holy books, which keeps us near to spiritual things and is very fruitful. Furthermore, we must work faithfully, not like worldly men who receive only the reward which passes away; for we shall receive not this alone but likewise a crown everlasting in Heaven.

We must consider how the holy angels specially announced the birth of our Redeemer to the shepherds who were occupied in their daily work. Yet we should not be importunate in our labour, but discreet and moderate, being careful above all things to keep silence therein; for in silence, as the Prophet says, is our strength; and though it is to be kept at all times and in all places, save for necessity or utility, much more is it to be kept while we labour with our hands, even as the Apostle says: « We beseech you, in the name of the Lord, that ye eat your bread in silence ».

Again, it is frequently needful to descend from the mount of contemplation for the sake of our neighbour, — that is, to cease from it for a while without abandoning our spiritual exercises entirely.

This may be done for our superior, for our equal, or for our inferior.

For the sake of our superior we must sometimes descend, because, although for our own sakes we may desire to be engaged in spiritual things, or to weep for our sins with Lazarus, or to awaken compunction at the memory of our sins or of the Last Judgment, or to sit with Mary at the feet of the Lord, — exercising our minds upon His life and passion, — or in some other spiritual exercise, however lofty, nevertheless if our superior calls upon us and orders us to descend, we must forthwith lay aside all these things and obey him without delay, thus placing ourselves at the feet of the vicar of Christ, and saying: « My heart is ready to fulfil Thy commandments, whether to give myself to contemplation, or to labour in outward things ». And this we are obliged to do not only by the command of our superior, but also frequently for charity, when we are admonished thereto by some brother. For the holy Fathers were called to postpone the whole of their exercises willingly, that they might preserve uncorrupted obedience, and they considered it to be greater than aught else if they did, not their own will, but the will of another. And though obedience, to the commandment of a superior or to necessity, is very needful, yet thou must not discuss with thyself whether thou art under an obligation to obey or no, for oft-times the obedience of charity has

greater merit than either of the others, and, when it is devoutly fulfilled, increases charity.

We should descend from the mount for the sake of our neighbour when our end is to succour him, moved thereto by compassion and pity, and the desire to lend aid or counsel. We must aid and succour the afflicted in their bodily necessities, but much more must we succour them if we see them to be afflicted in spirit; for we should aid them as far as we may, with admonition or correction, encouraging thèm likewise, counselling them in temptation and trouble, and bringing them strength. For if Saint Paul had not descended from the third Heaven, and stooped from the lofty estate of his spirit to help his weaker brethren, he would have attracted none. But by descending therefrom he became all things to all men: to the carnally-minded he preached Christ crucified and to the spiritually-minded he discoursed of spiritual things.

Even so must we ourselves be all things to all men, succouring each as necessity demands, above all if we see any going far from the yoke of Christ by reason of mortal sin. Such as these we must draw to Him by admonition and correction. Say not therefore in thy heart: « My own salvation suffices for me, and I would be solicitous for myself and not for another ». Neither say thou: « Am I then his superior or have I been appointed his keeper? » Consider that thoughts such as these are not engendered by zeal for God.

Wherefore help thou thy neighbour, aiding his bodily necessities with alms or other services, according to his wants. And if he have need of ghostly counsel pray thou for him and help him in spiritual things in so far as thou mayest. Counsel him, teach him and guide him, above all things with respect to temptation and to the practice of spiritual exercises. Yet see thou teach not any that which thou knowest not thyself, for it is better humbly to confess thy ignorance than presumptuously to attempt to teach others. Let thy counsel be ever in conformity with holy Scripture. Whatsoever is told thee by one who asks thy counsel, or whatsoever comes to thy knowledge by taking counsel of any, if these be secret things, see thou publish them not, especially when they concern the temptations of others, for from this there oft-times arise dangers. Again, when thou givest counsel, see that thou follow not thy passion or inclination; for passion perverts judgment, and zeal knows not how to learn to know. In like manner, before thou givest counsel, above all in difficult matters, think thou carefully thereon for some time, and say not the first thing that occurs to thee, but rather take thou counsel with thyself, and submit thy counsel to the views of others, else shalt thou be found stubborn. And desire rather to be consenting to the humble opinion of others than to follow thine own, despising the counsel of none, for God oft-times reveals to babes that which He hides from

the wise. Give ear to the counsel of every man, not that thou shouldst take it all, but that thou mayest think thereon thyself, and take that which seems to thee good. Even as the Apostle says: «Prove all things. Hold fast that which is good».

Thirdly, we must descend from the mount for the sake of our neighbour, when we have the care and burden of others, as prelates have to descend for the guardianship and discipline of their subjects. For their guardianship, that those who are walking in virtue, and living worthily, may be safely kept therein. For discipline, that the erring, and those whose way of life is disorderly, may be corrected. Else will the Lord of a truth require of the hands of those who are in authority the blood of such as are subject to them; and unless thou leadest the least of thy brethren, as far as in thee lies, thou shalt not see the face of Joseph, — that is to say, of Christ the true Saviour.

Consider further how full of peril is the estate of a superior, since he must so often forsake himself, and by this very self-neglect may so easily be lost. For when such a man is greatly occupied in things that are without, and is inwardly without occupation, he becomes negligent in spiritual exercises, his heart grows hard, and he is soon insensible to things of the spirit, finding no pleasure therein and having perception only of outward things. This is well shown by Saint Bernard in the first part of his

Book of Consideration. Wherefore, follow thou the counsel of the saints, and as far as in thee lies shun the dignity and position of a superior, and much outward occupation, though giving always humble and ready obedience. And when a man is constrained to devote himself to outward occupations, he must have recourse to things of the spirit, very solicitously, whensoever he may, and in whatsoever time he can spare for them; else, as we have said, he will become insensible to inward things.

Upon this Saint Gregory writes that holy men, when they are constrained by the necessity of their office to engage in outward ministry, study alway to retreat into the secret places of their own hearts, and thereby mount the heights of inward cogitation, and receive the law of the Lord, as it were upon a mountain. They lay aside for a while the bustle of temporal occupations, and in the loftiness of their contemplation search the decree of God's sovereign will. And that they may still serve without offence in their outward occupations, they are careful to have recourse unceasingly to the secret places of their hearts.

CHAPTER LXIX

Which treats of certain instructions to be observed by the exercitant concerning the matters aforementioned, wherewith we conclude the present work.

SINCE we have now considered, with the help of the Lord, how the devout man must exercise himself in meditation, prayer and contemplation, that he may unite his soul with God, by the three ways which are called Purgative, Illuminative and Unitive, we now conclude this present work, notwithstanding that which we have said in parts thereof, by setting down certain instructions which must be observed upon the matters above-mentioned, the which, that they may more easily be retained in the heart, we shall set down in paragraphs, according to the order of the alphabet, and before each paragraph we shall set its title.

A. Abdication. He that desires to meditate frequently must make abdication of all concupiscence of appetite, honour, delight, riches and external occupation of other kinds. For the imagination of these things distracts the mind.

B. Blamelessness of life. He must live virtuously, for the spirit of wisdom will not enter the naughty soul, neither will the spirit of meditation.

C. Constant confidence in the Beloved. He must

not quickly be withdrawn from the love of the Beloved by the temptations which come upon him. The devil strives to impede a man who meditates and is devout, by temptations of divers kinds. Wherefore thou must say: «I trust in Him Who says: 'My son, give Me thy heart'». For He desires not the death of a sinner but rather his salvation. Think naught concerning thy Beloved that is harsh or vexing, but say thou with Job, «Although He slay me yet will I hope in Him».

D. Demeanour of the body. When thou art alone, thou mayest use divers ceremonies in the disposition of thy members. Like Aaron, thou mayest raise thy hands. Like Solomon, thou mayest bend thy knees. Or at times thou mayest prostrate thyself and rise immediately without remaining in that posture, or kneel, as did Christ on the Mount of Olives. Likewise thou mayest be seated, as was Mary Magdalene at the feet of our Lord. Or thou mayest stretch out thy hands as did Christ upon the Cross. Again, thou mayest cast down thine eyes to the ground, as did the publican, or raise them to the heavens like the apostles at the Ascension of the Lord. By this outward diversity is engendered a diversity in the inward affections. Beginners should pray upon their knees, with their eyes fixed upon the ground, or should stretch their arms like a cross, or prostrate themselves. Progressives should pray upon their knees, raising their hands and eyes to the heavens.

Proficients may stand upright, and fix their eyes upon the heavens with desires and sighs of union. Contemplatives who have risen above themselves may be seated at the feet of our Redeemer. Yet be thou not singular in thy convent; rather do thou bow thy head when others do, making filial reverence thereby to the Lord as to a father. Kneel when others kneel, giving the reverence of a servant to his lord. Prostrate thyself with others, acknowledging thy Lord as thy Judge, and thyself as a guilty sinner, who has one day to return to dust.

E. Exercise of divers manners. Thy works must be diversified, as has been said: now read, now pray, now work thou fervently: and thus the hours will be short and thy labour light. If thou didst attempt to do the same thing continually thy profit would be less and thou wouldst quickly be worn out with fatigue.

F. The Final end of meditation. Let not the end of thy meditation, prayer and contemplation, be thine own profit, nor the avoiding of punishment, nor the hope of heavenly reward and prize, nor the sweetness of meditation, prayer and contemplation, for all these would belong to the love of a mercenary. But meditate, pray and contemplate from pure and filial love, that thou mayest prepare in thy heart a dwelling place for God, and give free course to His grace, and do the will of Him whose delight is to be with the sons of men, and to rejoice greatly in our salvation,

For the reasonable soul of man has been created for this purpose, namely, that he may have deep and loving union with his sweetest Creator: in this life, through meditation, prayer and contemplation, and in the life to come through everlasting fruition. To speak briefly, thou must in all these things seek the glory of God, and after this the honour of the saints, the virtue of the Church, and thine own salvation, ordering all things for the glory of God, even as the Apostle says: « Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God ».

G. Gratitude for grace. If in thyself thou feelest any good thing, give thanks for it, and become not proud. For it is not of him that desires, nor of him that runs, but of God's great mercy. Seek never to presume, for the grace of meditation is given not only to the good, but sometimes to the evil likewise.

H. Having many points for meditation. According to the opinion of Gerson, thou must have divers points for meditation, wherewith to be enkindled in love at the beginning of thy prayer, and of these points we have already spoken above.

I. Intimacy. Wheresoever thou goest, thou must ever, as it were, conceive within thyself thy Beloved, even as though thou hadst Him before thee; imagine Him in the cradle, in Egypt, upon the cross, etc., praising Him in thy heart with deepest rejoicing, speaking to Him as to a loving friend, putting before Him thy needs, and beseeching His help.

K. Kindness and charity. Be thou with thy neighbour, even as thou desirest that God may be with thee, — namely, be thou to him kind and merciful. Despise thou none, and so shalt thou be the friend of God. He that abhors none, despises none, and between friends, willing and nilling are as one. Or, to speak after another manner, we quickly grow cold and have therefore need of enkindled charity and fervour, which come from the sighings of prayer, and the fire of the passion of the Lord, by our pity for His sufferings, and desire to be united with Him, even as we have said above in speaking of the Unitive Way: «O Lord, when shall I love Thee, etc.»

L. Labour. Thou must work, and this not without reason: for in every occupation the beginning is the hardest part, and by custom its burden becomes lighter. See what toil the husbandmen suffer that they may reap the fruits of the earth; how merchants cross the sea and undergo great perils; how soldiers suffer the wounds of battle; and all these things are for causes which pass away, wherefore thou shouldst labour no less for the good things of eternity, but rather more.

M. Moderation, born of discretion, in one's actions. Thou must observe measure in all things. Be not too fervent nor too lukewarm. Be neither too remiss nor too restless. For it is written: Use moderation in all things, for measure is a most beauteous virtue.

N. Natural disposition. Consider that which best

befits thy nature. Some profit most by prayer; others by meditation; others are best swayed by the judgment of their reason; others by compassion upon their neighbours; others by thinking upon the benefits of God. Some reap most advantage from the active, others from the contemplative life. Likewise consider the nature of thy disposition with respect to eating and drinking, using both with moderation, for one man starves on that which for another is excess. See then that thy heart be not harmed by feasting or by drunkenness.

O. Order. Begin thou in the Purgative Way, so that first of all thou be washed and cleansed. Then seek thou enlightenment in the Illuminative Way, ere thou seek union with thy Beloved in the Unitive Way. For it befits not one that is bemired and soiled to approach the royal kiss ere he be cleansed. Nor canst thou walk upon the roof of a house ere thou hast learnt to walk upon the ground.

P. Promptness. Carry thyself all thy life long with respect to food, sleep and such like things, that thou mayest be ever prompt and ready to lift up thy heart, that these words may be fulfilled in thee: *Sursum corda, habemus ad Dominum.* And that thou mayest say: *Deus, Deus meus, ad te de luce vigilo.* Be thou then discreet in watching, continually prepared and ever of good will.

Q. Quietness. Flee thou from all that distracts, resting in the peace of the Lord, save when thou

art bound to perform some occupation, whether by thy office, through obedience or from necessity. Flee far from judgments and suspicions of others, which make the heart ever unquiet. And if thoughts of suspicion are born in thee, leave thou them, forming no judgment thereon, but saying: He that judges us is the Lord. Interpret doubtful things ever in the way that is most favourable. And, if a man fall, have compassion on him, saying: « Had this temptation come upon me, it may be that I should have fallen lower yet. »

R. Recollection. Recollect thyself frequently, and recall thy thoughts from things that are low to things that are high. From things temporal to things eternal. From things without to things within. From things that are vain to things that will last for ever. Desire not to hear vanity or any fable, but say thou: « I saw all things that were under the sun and I saw that all were vanity: and my Beloved alone is good and beautiful and to be loved, and is all-sufficient for me ».

S. Service of the saints. Thou shouldst ever have devotion to certain saints in particular, offering to them especial services daily, that they may ever pray for thee in the presence of God. Above all have devotion to Our Lady the Virgin Mary, to thy guardian angel and to some apostle, martyr, virgin and confessor, or to many of them, that they may pray for thee.

T. Total subjection. Submit thyself in all things

to the will of God, saying to Him: O my merciful Lord, Jesus Christ, do Thou with me even as Thou desirest and wilt. And if He grants thee great gifts of meditation, prayer or contemplation, receive these with fear; and if He grants them not to thee, endure thou this with patience, and be content, murmuring not, at all that He will do to thee. Thus shalt thou be one spirit with Him, thinking to know naught else, save Christ crucified.

U. Unceasing effort to soar higher in contemplative repose. If thou art a religious, thou art bound, as Gerson says, to aim at attaining repose of contemplation, even though at the end of thy life thou mayest hardly come thereto. And the reason for this is that the estate of religion requires it. For as the office of a knight is to defend the oppressed; of a husbandman to labour in the fields; so the office of a religious is to persist in contemplation and the like. As Saint Bonaventura says, begin thou one day at the point where thou didst leave off on the day before; be thou like one that would climb a high mountain, but turns not back and descends when he desires to rest, but wherever he is takes his rest in that same place and when he has rested sufficiently mounts further. We make no progress in contemplation for this reason, that whereas to-day we attain some grace with difficulty and by the favour of God alone, upon the next day we return to frivolous delights and idle talk, and lose what we have gained.

And thus we descend from the summit of the mount even to the abyss, and continue not upon our way.

X. Xt. Set thou naught before Christ, but beseech Him to be thy helper, protector, leader and goal of thy journey.

Ended is the present treatise called the Book of Exercises of the Spiritual Life, wherein, if a man exercise himself diligently, by reading, meditation, prayer or contemplation, he will quickly and readily, with the aid of the Lord, be raised on high and united with Him by fervent love, and in that state he may most surely await the happiness which is to come, and the prize and reward of his work. This book we have written in the vulgar tongue, because our intention has been to compose it for simple and devout men and not for the learned and the proud. For they that have humility, howsoever great their knowledge, will in nowise fail to esteem that which is good, because the style thereof is vulgar and plain.

DEO GRATIAS. AMEN.

NIHIL OBSTAT

D. Silvester Jofre, O. S. B.

CENSOR

IMPRIMATUR

D. Maurus Etcheverry, O. S. B.

ABBAS GENERALIS

Sublaci, 14 Septembris 1929.

NIHIL OBSTAT

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De mandato Exciæ. Illmæ.

Dr. Franciscus M.ª Ortega de la Lorena,

Canc. Secr.

Barcinone, 11 Aprilis 1929.

THE PRESENT TREATISE WAS COMPILED AND PRINTED IN THE MONASTERY OF OUR LADY, THE VIRGIN MARY OF MONTSERRAT, IN THE YEAR OF THE BIRTH OF THE LORD ONE THOUSAND AND FIVE HUNDRED, ON THE THIRTEENTH OF NOVEMBER.

AND FROM AN ORIGINAL COPY, IN THE SPANISH TONGUE WE HAVE MADE THIS THE FIRST ENGLISH TRANSLATION, THE PRINTING WHEREOF WAS FINISHED, IN THE SAME MONASTERY, ON THIS FIFTEENTH DAY OF AUGUST, BEING THE FEAST OF THE ASSUMPTION OF OUR LADY, IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD ONE THOUSAND NINE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-NINE.

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